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# THE INDIA I KNEW



JOY AND COLOUR: THE PILGRIMAGE

# THE INDIA I KNEW

1897-1947

BY

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## THE APOLOGY

THIS IS NOT history. That is recorded in part in the official tomes. It is a humble attempt to depict the India I knew from 1897 to 1947—the India which at the turn of the century saw the British connexion at its zenith; the dawn and growth of new political forces and their fulfilment on Independence Day; and the passing of a Civil Service which in the ability of its personnel, its lofty standard of integrity and devotion to the public weal was unsurpassed in the annals of government. The fabric of the administration which was remitted to Indian hands in 1947 remains; all else is changed almost beyond recognition. This heroic period should not pass without some attempt to show how Britons lived and worked in the great days of British rule and to pay a tribute to the Indian men of affairs who laid the foundations of democratic government.

I did not keep a diary; perhaps fortunately, because a copious diary can be the vehicle of a too-revealing egotism. For a quarter of a century I carried amongst my possessions the volumes which preserved the miles of articles I wrote for *The Times of India* and other newspapers; when the Second World War broke these went to the salvage dump. Again, perhaps fortunately: there are no more irritating words than "As I wrote." But it was my good fortune to be in close contact with viceroys, governors and eminent Civil Servants; with Indian politicians in and out of gaol; and to take a direct part in the pulsating industrial and commercial life of western India. These memories are fortified by a voluminous corre-

## THE APOLOGY

spondence which has been drawn upon with care and, I hope, discretion, and a scrupulous regard for the repute of men who, having "crossed over," cannot justify themselves. Errors may abound, for the Indian scene is so vast that a meticulous accuracy cannot be preserved, but a sincere effort has been made to avoid them. With all their faults of commission and omission, these pages are submitted for kindly judgment.

# I

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## LIFE IN THE 'NINETIES

JOURNALISM IS DITCHWATER

*Carlyle*

IS NOT EVERY ABLE EDITOR A RULER OF THE WORLD,

BEING AS HE IS A PERSUADER OF IT?

*Carlyle, in his less atrabilious vein*

AT LUNCH IN the head office of the P. and O. Company, one of the managing directors leaned across the table and said: "Stanley, you and I went to Bombay on Rs.300 a month." "Yes, Sambo," I retorted, "and we had an uncommonly good time out of it." Lord Inchcape, who was presiding, growled out: "I went on Rs.250." What he forgot to say was that, as recorded by his biographer, he had a nest-egg of £2,000, an encouraging beginning. Those who have passed through the mill will endorse the dictum of Whitaker Wright that it is the first £1,000 that takes the making, though they may not accept his corollary, after that money makes itself. The minions of the Treasury and of the tax-collector take good pains to see that money does not make itself.

The pampered passenger of today, voyaging East on the twenty-eight-thousand-ton *Ghusan*, landed alongside the wharf in Bombay, where he is speeded to the Taj Mahal Hotel with its air-conditioned dining-room; or stepping into the mail train, also air-conditioned, for the journey to Calcutta or the Frontier, has little concept of the eastward voyage in the 'nineties. For me there was no lordly P. and O., with its

<sup>1</sup> Figures are for the most part expressed in pounds sterling at the prevailing rate of the period—one and fourpence from the closing of the mints in 1893 until the First World War. Omitting the hectic period 1919-20, when the rupee soared to 2s. 11½d. and sank to 1s. 3d. in a few months, the stabilized figure is 1s. 6d. Rs.300 represented £20, or £240 a year.

## LIFE IN THE 'NINETIES

weekly sailings from London, and a speedier passage via the mail route from Brindisi: that was for the "high-up" ones. The cheapest passages to India were by way of the Austrian-Lloyd, which ran two regular ships, the *Imperator* and the *Imperatrix*, from Trieste. It passes the wit of all who used that route to understand why the Italians and Yugoslavs should quarrel over Trieste; because the objective of those who had to use it was to arrive at the last moment and leave at the first. Still, as always, there were compensations.

It was an unforgettable memory to cross the marshes to Venice in the glorious flush of a perfect July morning; to creep through the silent canals, even though they were stagnant on the ebb; and then into the Grand Canal, to meet the Church of the *Salute*. As this was a monsoon voyage, the *Imperator* and *Imperatrix* were not running; the service was by an ancient tub, the *Amphitrite*, with only four first-saloon passengers. There was little or no refrigeration; a live bullock was stalled forrard, and halfway through the voyage it was slain and *pièce de boeuf* became a staple article on the menu for the remaining days. Then, and for many years afterwards, the Austrian-Lloyd maintained the Victorians' practice of serving a dish of tea after dinner—a habit which has a considerable revival in the days we are living in. There were no punkahs until Port Said was passed, and then they were hung in the saloon and lazily pulled what time we sat at meat. We ambled along at twelve or thirteen knots; smelt the anything-but-spicy odours of the East at Port Said, then such a haunt of vice that it was dangerous to be abroad after dark; and slowly passed through the ditch in the desert which was then the Suez Canal. The full force of the south-west monsoon smote us when past the shelter of Socotra, where search was still being made for survivors from the wrecked P. and O. *Aden*, and we lay-to for hours in the Indian Ocean with a heated bearing.

Arrived in Bombay, the *Amphitrite* anchored in mid-stream, and Lovat Fraser, who came to meet the ship, staggered aboard and cried: "For heaven's sake get me a glass of brandy. I've been blown up the harbour to Mazagon and back again before we could make the ship." Then into the docks; a drive

to the Great Western Hotel in a hack victoria with the water over the floorboards, and this was the gorgeous East!

Before attempting a picture of the social life of Bombay which made exiguous salaries tolerable, and life even enjoyable, a passing tribute to the pioneers. Every fourth-form schoolboy has heard of the Taj Mahal, and many of the magnificence of Akbar's transient capital of Fatehpur Sikri and the caves of Ellora and Ajanta; but how many have even the faintest glimmerings of the foundation of the great modern capitals of India and the heroic enterprise which won them from the most unpromising surroundings?

Could there have been a more depressing prospect than the mudflats on the Hughli when Jacob Charnock laid the foundations of Calcutta? Sixty miles up the swift-flowing tides of the great river, with the James and Mary shoal to be passed—the graveyard of many a fine ship—and navigation so tricky that the pilots were a *corps d'élite* like those in the Mississippi whose story is told in Mark Twain's pages—what a dismal site for one of the greatest cities of the world! Madras harbour was literally torn from the surf-beaten shore on which generations of Anglo-Indians landed in Masulipatam craft, or on occasions did not land.

And Bombay! True there was the magnificent harbour, with its twenty miles of deep-water anchorage protected from the storms of the monsoon. But the place itself! Originally it consisted of seven small islands separated by breaches great and small, through which the sea roared at high tide, and receding left miles of stinking swamp which spread disease far and wide. Small wonder that for generations after the cession of the islands by the Portuguese, Bombay was for the British population a charnel house, where there was a proverb that "Two monsoons are the Age of Man." Those who now drive around the ample spaciousness of the Calcutta *maidan* with its fringe of great clubs and emporia, and through Clive Street, where the busy commercial houses and banks throb with activity, or along the broad highways of Bombay and the spreading quarters of Madras, should sometimes think of the brave men who looked far into the future and planned with such resolute courage.



How did the Briton live on his exiguous pay? I can write with knowledge only of Bombay; in Calcutta life was more expensive and in Madras cheaper; but in Bombay the pay sufficed. Actual necessities were comparatively modest. There were only two tolerable hotels, "Watson's" on the Esplanade and "The Great Western" fronting the dockyard of the Royal Indian Marine. All the material for "Watson's" was brought from England and erected on the site. "The Great Western" was housed in a former government office. Charges were generally at the rate of Rs.150 a month, with a reduction during the monsoon season, and this for ample board and lodging.

With a personal servant for Rs.15 a month and Rs.5 for the washerman, a bicycle, and a sola topi for protection against the sun, the "griffin" was sufficiently equipped. When the rains came and bicycles had to be put aside there were hack victorias with the standing charge of fourpence a mile. As for the social amenities, there was first the Gymkhana, with a subscription of seven and sixpence a month. That offered facilities for cricket, tennis on excellent hard courts, football, a bumble-puppy golf-course, polo and billiards. If any member sought relaxation in a wider field, there was a sporting little golf-course on Pali Hill, easily reached by train in half an hour; boating in the harbour from the basin where the Taj Mahal Hotel now stands, and cheerful boating, too, either with a sporting four, or, better still, an outrigger whiff quite safe in the harbour.

The wise griffin took what he could get for his first year and looked around him. If a decent fellow, he could certainly join a chummery, a little company of three or four who took a flat, arranged a joint commissariat, and possibly ran to a hired billiard table, the usual subscription for rent and messing being the same as in a hotel—Rs.150 a month. The boarding-house was a Calcutta rather than a Bombay institution. Many a magnate who retired with his knighthood and a modest fortune has looked back on his days in the chummery or the boarding-house as amongst the most satisfying in his life.

<sup>1</sup> Griffin was the old term, now practically obsolete, for one newly arrived in India and unaccustomed to Indian ways and peculiarities.

Having found himself, and learnt exactly how far his few rupees would go, the griffin flew a little higher. Clubs—with the possible exception of the United States, club life was never better organized than in India. The business men's club was the "Bombay," in leased premises in the centre of the business quarter, the great luncheon or tiffin club with the best food in Asia. Those who have not eaten a freshly caught pomphret, the most delectable of fishes, not even excluding the sole, served with anchovy butter sauce, or a Bombay club prawn curry, or the corned hump of the Indian bullock, do not know what good plain food is. Washed down on festive occasions with a pint of Moselle cup in a tin cup—no club waiter knew what a tankard was—it was a feast for the gods, especially when topped-off by a glass of Madeira and a slice of the richest plum cake—a custom inherited from the military messes, which was a long time a'dying. Lunch was one and fourpence and dinner two and eightpence. Before my sailing one of the sleeping partners in the firm, himself an old resident of Bombay, warned me in solemn terms: "I hope you will not join the Bombay Club. A hard-drinking club, young sir; avoid it."

The hard-drinking days were coming to an end; they could not be pursued in the increasing pressure of life; but there was still a leaven of the old gang. Those were the days of the burra peg—a long glass, twice the size of the ordinary tumbler, filled with weak whisky and soda. The chota peg was the small tumbler. The soda-water was bottled at high pressure to give it sparkle. It was not uncommon for the old Anglo-Indians to make for the club at half-past twelve and drink a chota peg or two before lunch, and the meal always opened with a burra peg followed by one or two of the smaller. Then a game or two of billiards and back to the office to sign letters; and a return to the club for black pool and whisky until at seven o'clock it was time to go home to dinner. The brandy-pawnee of Jos Sedley's generation never recovered from the devastation of phylloxera and whisky was the standard beverage. But, as a sound spirit of pre-war strength—indeed slightly stronger than the whisky obtainable in England—could be had for £2 a dozen, and a chota peg cost fourpence,

the drain on the most modest purse was not exhausting. When bubonic plague smote the city its devastating blow in 1896 someone started the hare that the best preventive was whisky and the bottle-a-day drinker was not uncommon; but that again was a passing phase. There was another theory that ample food was a good preventive and, this having been told to the Pope, he granted dispensation from fasting to the faithful in India. That privilege is said to be still valid.

The next step up the social ladder was the Yacht Club, with its verandahed rooms and grassy lawn fronting the harbour. This was the most famous club in India, the rendezvous of every passenger on his voyages to and from India. Kipling claimed that one had only to haunt Bombay, Colombo and Charing Cross to meet everyone in Asia: on mail days the lawn of the Yacht Club was the gathering place of everyone worth knowing. Not every member of the club was a yachtsman, far from it, certainly not more than ten per cent.

Strange ideas obtained in other parts of India as to the role of the Yacht Club; it was thought to be a yachting centre and little else. Before I went to India a friend from the north gave this sage advice: "You are going to Bombay! Take a yacht with you. Not a small one, but at least a ten-tonner." Good heavens! A ten-ton yacht when it was a matter of studying shillings and sixpences; but as the mentor's services had been spent in Sikkim, in the remote north-east, he was not a very reliable guide.

The club was the social centre of Bombay in the 'nineties, and as the wives and families of members had the right of user it was the gathering place of the British clans. But for those who loved the sea it was paradise. The lateen-rigged yachts had gone out, or were going out, of fashion, and there had just been introduced a new small class, designed by Linton Hope, built locally of teak in the yard of the Royal Indian Marine or privately, with sails by Lapthorne or Rattray, and easily manned by the owner and a tindal. For an outlay of, say, £100, and a monthly charge of £3 or £4, even those with modest purses could enjoy eight months' perfect sailing, with races every week-end and a regatta at the height of the season.

The club had just built its massive residential chambers, and about them there is a little story. The chambers faced the south-west monsoon, and *mirabile dictu* had no verandahs, so they were well baked during the day and open to torrential rains when the monsoon came. When they were opened, not unnaturally, protest was made, to which the Commodore made a crushing rejoinder. He assured the members that this had been provided for—the floors of the chambers sloped outwards so that when the rains came in the water would run off.

The Byculla Club was for the grave and reverend seniors; no griffin was eligible unless he arrived with unimpeachable introductions; he was supposed to serve an apprenticeship of at least ten years before he could be considered for membership. The "Byculla" was a club in the grand manner. Erected on the site of the old racecourse, with the original assembly rooms as a nucleus, it was indeed nobly shaped. I never entered the portico, reached by a generous flight of steps, and so into the great classic dining-room, with its doors of the finest Moulmein teak thirty feet high, without a sense of awe at the boldness of the planners and of the subaltern who was the architect. For years after the introduction of electricity members fought against the barbarism of fans in the dining-room, and when you sat at meat in came the *hamal* with the traditional fan on a six-foot pole and swayed it to and fro behind you during the meal. By way of contrast there was the kiosk. During the Share Mania in the 'sixties an enterprising Parsi imported an iron structure like a small railway station, but was bankrupt by the time of its receipt. The club bought it cheap and erected it on a raised platform, and there, open to all the breezes, the members preferred to lunch or dine, especially after electric fans were installed.

The "Byculla" was also the cheapest club for those waiting for opportunity, or husbanding their resources against retirement; a "dungeon" or ground-floor room cost no more than £2 5s. a month, and a chamber on the first or second floor, with its bedroom, dressing-room, verandah and bathroom, could be rented for £4 10s. monthly. The "Byculla" in Bombay, the "Bengal" in Calcutta, the "Madras," and the "Sind" at Karachi—these were the aristocracy of the clubs of

India, with a liberal interchange of membership, and the happy traveller could be sure of a residential welcome in each of the capital cities. Even in the 'nineties the "Byculla" was outliving its usefulness; a network of mean streets cut it off from the business centre, and it was increasingly hemmed in by the native town. Periodically the members assembled in solemn conclave to consider whether it should migrate to more accessible quarters, and always rejected the suggestion because of tradition and spacious comfort.

During the boom which followed the First World War the club was offered the princely sum of a quarter of a million pounds for its house and spreading grounds, but turned it down because of the difficulty of securing an alternative site, and eked out a precarious existence by selling a bit of land from time to time. To anticipate, when the club was wound up after the Second World War it was sold lock, stock and barrel for £270,000, and each surviving member, including many who had retained their membership after retiring from India, received £1,100—surely a unique record of profit from club membership. Add the Ladies' Gymkhana amid the exclusive residences of Malabar Hill, where tennis was played in the fine weather, and badminton on wet evenings—never was a community better furnished with club amenities for one and all.

But India was pre-eminently the land of the horse. If compensation was sought for exile—and a vast amount of nonsense was talked of the hardships of exile—it was found in the cheapness of horseflesh. As soon as the griffin had a few hundred rupees to his credit—perhaps more often before—he could sally forth to the Arab stables, and, over innumerable little saucers of coffee, for thirty or forty pounds take his pick of the new arrivals. It was a gamble. That pony might turn out a winner, with a chance for the Lucknow Cup, or good at polo, or remain just a hack. For those in search of bigger game there were the Australian Walers, which took their name from New South Wales. The Waler might be anything, from the "Brumbie," bred wild, roped in at due season, ewe-necked and goose-rumped; or from the stud book, tracing descent from the famous Carbine. Kept in cotton-wool for a

year after landing to be acclimatized, the Waler was good for ten or twelve years' service, standing up to the hard ground of India far better than the imported English horse. Equipped with an Arab or Waler, or possibly a very uncertain country-bred, a set of locally made harness, and a subaltern's trap, our griffin was a very superior person indeed. For less than £50, if he was modest in his ideas, there was a pony for the trap and for an occasional chukker of polo; or a charger for the Bombay Light Horse and hacking; and hunting twice a week with the Bombay hounds in the island of Salsette, and all for a standing charge of about £4 a month.

The Bombay Hunt merits an ode unto itself. This was a poor man's hunting at its best. During the summer months the Master and the professional huntsman toured the English kennels picking up a foxhound here and there until twenty to thirty couples were gathered, and these were shipped to India in September or October, and gradually hardened for the season.

As soon as the rains were over and the rice fields of Salsette had dried, the tents of the Jackal Club were raised round the kennels at Santa Cruz, about thirteen miles from Bombay, and by the end of November all was ready. Before dawn the field assembled, often it was so dark that a succession of twinkling lights from hurricane lamps showed where the *saises* were piloting their masters over the flats. Others filtered in from the early morning train or from the bungalows round and about, and, as soon as it was light enough to see where one was going, the hounds moved off. No mystery was made of the fact that the quarry was a "bagman," but some of these jackals often gave a sporting run.

The ground was terribly hard, the bunds<sup>1</sup> of the rice-fields afforded plenty of jumping, and often walking afterwards over the Melon Ground, seamed and fissured from the heat, one asked oneself: "Did I really ride over that?" The halcyon days were when the line lay through the Horseshoe Valley, a wide stretch of varied ground to the east of Santa Cruz, and good was it to be alive in the crispness of the morning, with

<sup>1</sup> Bunds are low earthen embankments which in the monsoon retain water in the fields. After the rains the sun bakes them hard as stone.

the scent of the wild thyme tingling the nostrils when crushed beneath the hooves, and the brushing of the mango leaves as the hunt swept to the kill. Scent would not lie after eight o'clock on the coldest morning, so hounds were then called off, there was the hack back to the Jackal Club, a cup of coffee and a sandwich, a quick change, and the train. These were the days before motor-cars. It was easy to be in the office and begin the day's work by ten o'clock. The subscription to the hunt for two days a week was £7.

Happy days and happy memories! Here are two. It was on one of these occasions that I had the narrowest squeak of my life. It was in the early train, which reached Santa Cruz station in inky blackness. The door of the carriage was jammed. There was only one other occupant, a little lady. "Now, look here, madam," I said, "you get out of the window," and as she was light of weight it was easy to pick her up and project her on the platform. When my turn came it was another story; my top boot caught in the top of the window, and there I hung, not exactly like Absalom by the hair, but grimly by the boot. The train started and gathered way; it was too dark for my predicament to be seen. Luckily, just as the train was leaving the station, Colonel Meade saw my plight, seized me round the shoulders and dragged me from my perch. We both rolled down the ramp, none the worse, and certainly not too shaken to enjoy the run.

Never was the hunt more alert than when Lord and Lady Willingdon were in the field. Lady Willingdon was a superb horsewoman, riding hard and straight, and at the end of the longest run she was as spick and span as at the meet, what time other women were often blousy and battered. Lord Willingdon was a good rider, but in the opinion of his consort needed watching. One of the staff was always told to follow him, much to his indignation. "Go away, Jungli," Willingdon would protest to his aide. "Don't you dare to follow me." But the *aide* was more afraid of Lady Willingdon than of H.E., and whilst disclaiming any idea of duty, asserting warmly that he was following his own line, he quietly did as he was bid. At the exit from the Horseshoe Valley was a stiff hill, thickly prickled with scrub, and on one of the best of mornings the

hounds were crashing over it. There were three alternative lines—round the hill to the right or left, where the going was comparatively easy, or over the hill, which meant a climb and thrusting through the undergrowth. Hounds, master and whippers-in, as of duty bound, went over the hill and Lady Willingdon followed. A small band of us sought the easier path round and were right; we picked up hounds on the farther side, where they soon killed, whipped them off and waited. There is vivid in my memory the picture of Lord Willingdon, seated on a rice bund wiping the perspiration off his face, and when Lady Willingdon arrived later, smiling with ineffable satisfaction as much as to say: "Well, my lady, I had you that time."

There was a fly in the ointment—housing. It is hard to recall any period when house accommodation was not the continuing anxiety of the British community. In the middle of the century Bartle Frere, wisest of governors, threw down the ramparts of the virgin fortifications which so manacled the residential area that offices and residences were huddled into a congested mass. His successors planned nobly. They ran a broad esplanade from the Apollo Bunder, the landing-point of generations of travellers, to the border line of the native town. They erected, facing the sea on the west, the imposing array of public buildings which today stand unsurpassed in India—the Secretariat, the University Convocation Hall with its graceful Rajabhai Tower, the High Court and the Public Works Secretariat. Later, and farther to the north, the Corporation raised the Municipal Offices; and the Great Indian Peninsula Railway built the monumental terminus at Bori Bunder.

Purists sniff at the florid architecture of the period; they jeer at meaningless cusp and cupola; and truly, though dubbed Italian-Gothic, French-Gothic, neo-Gothic, or Indo-Saracenic, it belongs to no recognized school. But what right has a generation which tolerates Bridge House on the south side of Lambeth Bridge on the finest site in London, or gazes in awe at the new beauties in Berkeley Square, to scoff at those who had no model to guide them? Would it have done better or half as well? For myself, I never drove from the Apollo



## LIFE IN THE 'NINETIES

Bunder to Malabar Hill by moonlight—such moonlight as only those who have dwelt in the sub-tropics can realize—without being profoundly moved; again and again the lines of Wordsworth came to mind:

“Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;  
And all that mighty heart is lying still!”

Then a grievous paralysis overtook the Government and the Municipality alike; the vacant lands lay idle, held firm in a bureaucratic grip which was fearful of selling or leasing, and every form of enterprise was discouraged. The banks and the business offices centred on Elphinstone Circle, on the site of the old Cotton Green, quite a good example of planning and development for its day, but hopelessly out of date. Others were jammed in the narrow streets of the old Fort area. When the Chartered Bank had the courage to move a hundred yards to the north, old-stagers threw up their hands in horror and asked: “Who on earth is going into the jungle to do business?”

The original reclamation company of the 'sixties had won a strip of the foreshore in Back Bay, but the Government of the day snaffled it without payment in the manner of governments elsewhere and used it to bring the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway from its terminus in the heart of the bazaar to the southernmost part of the island, with the result that between the original foreshore and the sea there was imposed the impassable barrier of the railway. This approach to the slopes of Malabar and Cumballa Hills, where The Great Ones dwelt, passed the principal Hindu Burning Ghat, where during the height of the plague epidemic the skies were red with the funeral pyres and the air thick with the heavy scent of charring flesh. The level-crossing over this railway was a solace to many a belated diner out: he could always plead for his lateness that he was held up at the gates. Indeed, he could sometimes make that plea with success even after the level-crossing had been replaced by a bridge. There is a story about that level-crossing which, though based on a familiar pattern, is authentic. An impatient lady loudly demanded to be let through as the gates were drawing together, and, berating the

English police sergeant on duty, demanded in strident tones: "Do you know who I am? I am the wife of the honourable Jusice. . . ." "I don't care whether you are his wife or his mistress," retorted the policeman, "you will not pass."

The merchant houses of the day were chary of buying and building, with one exception. The firm of W. and A. Graham bought and maintained a generous house for the heads of the firm, which was so identified with the locality that every hack victoria driver knew Graam-ke-gully, and no other name for the road. Otherwise all the fine houses on the hills were owned by Hindus and Mahomedans and Parsis, and leased to Europeans at rapidly rising rents. Changes were in train. The Black Death was inevitably most severe in the crowded purlieus of the bazaar, where the Indian merchants clung to their ancestral dwellings, fretted, carved, brightly painted, but terribly insanitary, infested with the rats which were the carriers of the disease. They naturally looked to their properties on the hills and moved in themselves, and so a bungalow became less and less a possibility for the Briton.

Most of the bachelor fraternities, the chummeries, were in the old Fort area, and queer places they were. Rats of enormous size had the run of those houses and one of the old school of liars used to aver that he had seen a rat pick up his fox-terrier, shake it and drop it down the stairs. It was not uncommon for the visitor to be warned: "Tread lightly, dear fellow; the floors are a bit dicky." Sanitation in the modern sense there was none. True, a great main sewer with a few branches ran down the centre of the island until it discharged its noisome contents into the sea in mid-island, where it was washed up and down the western foreshore, foul and stinking. Water carriage there was little or none; the commode, locally known as the thunder-box, was universal. What the puritanical American scientist called the "digestion ash" was collected by sweepers, male and female, dumped into night-soil carts and thrown into depots for discharge into the sewers. Imagination was not a strong point with the municipal officials, and one thoroughfare bore in bold lettering the name of Night Soil Depot Lane.

This house famine induced a practice unique in India. With the ending of the rains and the advent of the cold weather, say November, there sprang up a colony of tent-dwellers. The word tent may conjure up in the mind of the stay-at-home Briton the picture of a bell tent, where all sleep feet to pole, or at the best a small marquee. Nothing could be farther from the reality; tentage in India attained a perfection never reached in other lands. There was the main tent, drawing-room and dining-room in one; out of it opened a series of quite roomy secondary tents, bedroom, bathroom and retiring-room for each of the household; a kitchen tent and accommodation for the domestic staff. When the hot weather arrived, April-May, the annual migration began; the leave season started. So the tent-dwellers moved into the vacated quarters for the rains. A restless, unsatisfying life, which intensified the bird-of-passage atmosphere of Anglo-Indian society, but it was passing. The first block of flats had been erected on the Apollo Bunder, and eyebrows were raised in dismay at the prodigious rent of Rs.300 a month! In a few short years Bombay passed from the bungalow to the flat, and a new era began.

The good fortune which pursued me throughout my life in India set in early. Marriage was approaching; where to live—that was the problem. On a chance visit to Pali Hill a kindly dame asked me what I was doing about it, and, when told that nothing had offered, said: "Why not take Sanders Slater's bungalow? He has been invalided home and it is vacant." That was on the Saturday; the bungalow was inspected on the Sunday; and the lease signed on the Monday; and that was my home for the next twenty-three years. Warnings were not few. The colleague who in the early days delighted to take me round the cemeteries and, tapping tombstones with his stick, emphasized the frequency of sudden death, protested: "You have taken the bungalow in Dongarsi Road; it is the unhealthiest in Bombay; everyone who lives in it gets sick." When pressed to give particulars, all he could say was: "Frank Cook, who lived in it, fell from his horse and broke his leg; Jimmy Lat, who followed, took to drink and did not stop." Well, that could hardly be put down to the bungalow; at any

rate, Sanders Slater occupied it for eleven years before he broke down; it was not the time to boggle at risks.

These bungalows have passed. What were they like and how did we live in them? The pattern was broadly common. A high plinth which raised the floor five feet above the ground-level; a *porte cochère* under which a four-in-hand could have been driven with ease; a wide verandah running round three sides. High french windows gave entrance into the main living-room—living- and dining-room in one; half-doors into the sleeping quarters, bedroom, dressing-room and bathroom on each side. Best of all, an earlier tenant had erected an annexe, reached by a covered way, providing another large bedroom with dressing-room and bathroom open to the breeze from every quarter. Yet another covered way gave access to the domestic quarters, kitchen, storeroom or godown, and four quite decent rooms for the servants. Stabling for three horses in loose-boxes; a coach-house for two carriages; and a compact but sufficient garden.

That was the modest bungalow of tradition, admirably suited to the climate of Bombay, and roofed with country tiles several layers thick, far surpassing in comfort the modern buildings which were springing up. For this the inclusive rent was Rs.150 a month, or say £10 at the then rate of exchange. To illustrate the rise in the value of property in Bombay: Shortly after the end of the First World War my landlord asked if I would stick to my rights under the Rent Restriction Act if he had a good offer. "Well, Mr. Ramji," I replied, "I have a good landlord, you have a good tenant; I will not stand in your way if you can find me somewhere else to sleep." That assurance given, Mr. Ramji added that he would not sell under two lakhs (that is, Rs.200,000), which at the then rate of exchange represented a capital sum of £25,000. The original cost of the property at the beginning of my tenancy was Rs.20,000, or £1,350.

Apart from the bare structure, what a house! The floors were of beaten mud, covered as a general rule with Chinese matting, which rotted in a year or two. The bathrooms half mud, half broken china set in cement which was crumbling. The stables and domestic quarters dark and insanitary. So it

## LIFE IN THE 'NINETIES

was not surprising to find, shortly after the lease was signed and before entering into occupation, the stables and servants' quarters painted in large red letters: "U.H.H."—unfit for human habitation.

Under the special powers with which the health authorities were invested to deal with plague there was this right to condemn all dwellings below a reasonable standard, and the strong arm of the law had come down. So the stables were paved, the domestic offices stone-floored, the roofs raised and larger dormer windows fitted. The Municipality bought a small strip of the compound to widen a road, and this meant closing an ancient well, fit breeding-ground for mosquitoes.

Hard things are sometimes said of landlords, Indian and otherwise; never was there a better landlord than Mr. Hurgovindas Ramji, who came from a good Kapole Bania family. Under the original lease he stipulated that he should do no more than the statutory repairs; in practice, by mutual agreement, the verandah was laid with marble; the living-rooms with good red Marseilles tiles; the hideous chocolate paint stripped off and everything coloured a restful shade of green. Between the bungalow and the sea there was nothing but a mango grove; here indeed one could sing with the author of *Indian Love Lyrics*:

Many a man has a secret dream  
Of where his soul should be,  
Mine is a low verandahed house  
In a tope beside the sea.

It was with a bit of a shock, on returning to India a year after my active editorship of *The Times of India* had ceased, to find in the newspapers laid out in the smoking-room of the P. and O. a bold advertisement:

"To Let. On Malabar Hill. The bungalow occupied for twenty-three years by Sir Stanley Reed."

How did we live on exiguous pay before the advent of electricity, the refrigerator, and that boon and blessing to men—Flit and Shell-tox, which waged successful war against insect pests? Not too badly. The bearer, the retainer of good caste, with entire charge of the domestics but doing little himself,

never took root in western India; his place was taken by the butler, generally a Surti from the Surat district, more rarely a Goan tracing his descent from the first Portuguese immigrants. In a modest household there was the butler; his assistant, who also acted as dressing boy; the houseman or *hamal*, who trimmed the lamps; and the man of all work. The cook was always a Goan, and uncommonly good cooks they were; he engaged and paid for his apprentice, or mate. Some ladies kept an *ayah*, generally if there were children, and retained—or shared—the *dirzie* or sewing-man. There were one or two *malis* for the garden, and a *sais* for each horse. Once a week the *dhobi* collected and staggered away with a huge bundle of soiled linen which he banged clean on the rocks of the western foreshore; incidentally, there is no truth in General Young-husband's explanation that linen was beaten on the rocks not for the purposes of cleanliness but to murder the little "gentlemen" lingering in the folds. Nor was Mark Twain wholly justified when he cried aloud: "Rend your hearts and not my garments."

In a modest household, where the memsahib was economical and the mere male not exigent, the wages bill was about £10 a month. The day began at dawn, with *chota hazri*, little breakfast of tea and toast served on the verandah, but before dawn the cook had sallied forth with his attendant factotum to the market for the daily supplies of meat, fish, vegetables and fruit. He was back in time to prepare and serve breakfast at nine o'clock, though the market was four miles from Malabar Hill.

In a very modest establishment like my own the daily bazaar ran into a rupee or a rupee and a half per head a day. Oilman's stores, if that obsolete generic term can be used, were what the housewife liked to make them; before what was euphemistically called discriminating protection had grown into a high tariff, prices were about ten per cent above the English rate to cover import charges. Fish was excellent and abundant; the pomphret, cooked in any of half a dozen ways, had no superior; meat is another story. The slaughter-houses at Bandra, on the outskirts of the island, delivered the kill to smelly meat vans run by the Municipality, and the odour from

these ox-drawn wains if encountered on the main road was enough to weaken any appetite. Wise folk eschewed beef unless it was the hump of the special breed of Indian cattle, and that when corned was a delectable dish. Mutton was passable, if the cook was honest enough to reject goats' flesh. Poultry was plentiful and cheap. Eggs were about the size of an English pullet's eggs, and it used to be said that only the Germans had the enterprise to make egg-cups small enough to fit them. Fruit was poor, save during the weeks of April and May, when the Alphonse mango rejoiced the heart of the gourmet. There were always curries, and whilst others may boast—Madras of its dry curries, Ceylon with its dozen or more of varied accessories—my allegiance goes to the Bombay prawn-curry, white or brown, to the Bombay chicken-pilau, the spatchcock chicken. My mouth waters at the very thought.

The *burra khana*, or formal dinner, was dying hard; those who want to know what it was in Jos Sedley's days must re-read their *Curry and Rice* or *Hickey's Diary*. What boring occasions they were! Hors d'oeuvre, always of sealed pattern, two soups, fish, an entrée, a roast, a bird, a sweet and an ice. There was a good deal to be said, too, for the loose-skinned oranges from Nagpur, which at their best were delightful. Fruit was never served; it was supposed to be poison at night. We sat down at eight o'clock; rose about half-past nine or later. Perhaps there was music. Conversation did not exist; talk was always of personalities, not things. There was a certain comradeship. Cooks helped each other out. They were strongly if secretly organized, and on one of my occasions I stumbled on their club in Cavel, where each member kept a box for a few pence a month and where the merits and demerits of the memsahib were canvassed. Woe betide the lady who incurred the ire of the fraternity; she was black-listed and was puzzled to find that she was quite unable to engage an efficient substitute. There was also a pleasant atmosphere of camaraderie. It was not uncommon when dining out to find that your own plate appeared on the table; it was "borrowed" for the occasion but always scrupulously replaced. And how caste entered even into the humbler ranks of life!

When Sir Frank Sly was elevated to a commissionership his butler made salaams and said: "Sahib, hum bahut kushy, Sahib Commissioner now." "Thank you, Sulka," responded Sly, "but why are you so pleased?" Quick came the explanation: "I now taking in senior vegetable." A mystery attached to the senior vegetable; watch on the etiquette of the *burra khana* showed that the servant of the senior guest always passed—the potatoes.

An episode recorded by the Chief Minister of an Indian State, a Rajput, and therefore above caste—"I was sitting on my verandah and a card was brought in: Ramchandra Rao, Esq., B.A., LL.B. Taking him for an official visitor, I asked his business. 'I am your cook. I have no objection to serving you and your family, but I draw the line at your guests.' A graduate and a lawyer, what was he doing as a cook? His explanation was convincing. 'As a clerk I might earn an uncertain Rs.30 a month. As cook you pay me sixty.' " That was without taking account of perks; an Indian cook who does not make ten per cent of his account as *dasturi* does not know his job. Yet how rare it was to find any Brahmin who would take to an occupation where he had to use his hands!

' *Dasturi*: "That which is customary. That commission or percentage on the money passing in any cash transaction which, with or without, permission, sticks to the fingers of the agent of payment." *Hobson Jobson*.



## GROWTH OF PUBLIC OPINION

THE CITIES ARE FULL OF PRIDE,  
CHALLENGING EACH TO EACH—  
AND THE MEN THAT BREED FROM THEM  
THEY TRAFFIC UP AND DOWN,  
BUT CLING TO THEIR CITIES' HEM  
AS THE CHILD TO THE MOTHER'S GOWN;

*Rudyard Kipling*

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF this Anglo-Indian society were illustrated in the newspaper press. It was the day of the amateur, the highly competent amateur often, but the amateur nevertheless. The high-water mark was reached by the *Pioneer*, published at Allahabad, owned by a syndicate of business men with large outside industrial interests and edited by G. M. Chesney, son of the distinguished engineer associated with the barren project for a Euphrates Valley Railway. Chesney was a fine scholar, but in no sense a journalist, and Allahabad was so remote from the political and industrial life of India that it was nicknamed Dustypore. There was great scope for a national—in the distributive sense—newspaper of this calibre. All over India there were pockets of Britons with no interest in local affairs, aloof from the growing manufacturing power, rather indifferent to Indian politics, mildly concerned with world affairs.

The *Pioneer* was to be seen in every club, every regimental mess and many business offices; for this community it was admirably suited, it was really a daily magazine rather than a newspaper. It had a brilliant body of contributors from London, and Chesney's lack of journalistic experience was corrected by one of the ablest colleagues who came to India—Maitland Park. Park served the paper for some sixteen years as assistant editor, and after a brief editorship migrated to

Cape Town on the advice, it was reported, of Rudyard Kipling, and there established so sound a reputation on *The Cape Times* that after the Boer War Botha offered him the post of High Commissioner in London. Contact with the Government was maintained by a resident correspondent at Simla and Calcutta in Howard Hensman, whose connexion with Indian journalism went back to the 'seventies; he was with Roberts in Kabul and was actually dictating a message to London when there was a click and the sergeant-signaller remarked: "Wire cut, sir," which inaugurated the isolation of the British force in the Sherpur cantonment after the repulse of Charasia. Always with the high-up ones, alternating between the United Service Club at Simla and the Bengal Club in Calcutta, according to the movements of the Government of India, Hensman had something like a monopoly of official news until Curzon admitted other correspondents into the reserve, an offence for which he was never forgiven at Allahabad.

Although other changes were pending which weakened the special position of the *Pioneer*, it never recovered from the loss of a man of the capacity of Park.

In Calcutta the organ of the British community was the *Englishman*, edited for years by a former pilot in the Hughli River service, though the *Statesman* was forging ahead. That great paper was controlled by the Knight brothers, whose father, Robert Knight, was for a time editor of *The Times of India*, and in that capacity waged so successful a war against the heavy land revenue demands of the Bombay Government that the citizens presented him with a valuable purse. There was a difference of opinion with his business partner as to whether this was a gift to the firm or to him personally, and Knight moved a few years later to Calcutta, bought the *Friend of India*, which he amalgamated with one of his ventures called the *Indian Statesman*, and developed the two into the *Statesman*. Beauchamp, a former official of the Salt Department, who won his spurs as editor of the memoirs of the Abbé Dubois, directed the *Madras Mail* with sober ability. The *Civil and Military* of Lahore was the organ of the Punjab and was edited by a former tea-planter. The best picture of a

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most successful newspaper in the hot weather will be found in what many critics regard as Kipling's finest short story, "The Man Who Would be King," for it was on the *Civil and Military* that Kipling served his brief apprenticeship to journalism, though he had a limited connexion with the *Pioneer*.

The only real newspaper man was Thomas Bennett, then part proprietor and editor of *The Times of India* in Bombay. He had passed through the mill at Wisbech, Bath and Bristol, and moved ahead to be leader-writer on the *Standard* during the flourishing days of Mudford. Under one name or another *The Times of India* might claim to be the oldest newspaper in India, for it celebrated its centenary in 1928.

Life in Bombay in the 'nineties hung by a slender thread. Henry Curwen, who preceded Bennett, was a minor novelist, just good enough to secure mention in *The Dictionary of National Biography*, a Bohemian more often seen in his pyjamas on the verandah of his bungalow than in the office; his business partner, Kane, formerly a wine merchant, hail-fellow-well-met with everybody, chased around for printing contracts and left his energetic Parsi foreman to grind out the stuff on obsolete machines. Curwen was very proud of the paper and its traditions, and, as they were far from secure under any of his staff, left provision in his will that his share was to be offered to Bennett, then assistant on the *Bombay Gazette*, which was dying with the slowness characteristic of anaemic newspapers. Kane died two years later; he was buried at sea between Bombay and Aden, by a strange chance as near as could be on the spot where Curwen's body had been committed to the deep; and the concern came under the sole control of Bennett.

Used as any cub reporter must be to mild shocks, I had to open my eyes very wide indeed when I walked up the stairs of *The Times of India* office in July, 1897. *The Times and Mirror* was not exactly nobly housed, for it was tucked away behind the Bristol Post Office in what was appositely named Small Street; but it was equipped with modern rotary presses and an adequate composing-room. *The Times of India* was squeezed into an ancient building on the fringe of the bazaar, and this is revealing—there were no sanitary arrangements

beyond a *pot de chambre* behind a discreet screen in the editor's room and a similar receptacle for the manager; for the rest, when Nature called it was a visit to the club. Adjoining, a covered courtyard housed a collection of decrepit machines that dealt with the general printing business which brought useful grist to the thin financial mill. The paper itself was produced direct from the type on an obsolete flat-bed Middleton whose groans were heard far into the night, and which broke down at least once if not twice a week.

In common with other British-owned papers single copies were sold for fourpence, but at the annual subscription rate twopence-halfpenny a copy. These prices induced an organization unique of its kind. One-third of the outprint was taken by what were miscalled circulating libraries at reduced rates. These entrepreneurs delivered copies to subscribers at six o'clock in the morning; collected them at nine and passed them on to the second group; collected them again at noon for the third class of readers; and then finally gathered them a fourth time and posted them up-country. So in the long run the daily use of the paper cost little over the nimble penny, a system made workable only by virtue of very cheap labour and the departure of all the important mail trains in the evening. So, although the outprint was about three thousand a day, most copies passed through four hands; quite a respectable circulation for India, where even in its palmy days, with the whole sub-continent for its orbit, the *Pioneer* never passed the four-thousand mark.

There was a tranquil leisureliness in the journalism of the 'nineties strange indeed to one who had experienced the galvanizing activities of Northcliffe and the *Daily Mail*. The working day closed about five o'clock; everything later was held over for the morrow. For instance, the biggest local event was the meeting of the municipal corporation, then in the heyday of its influence. The whole force of the reporting staff was mobilized for the occasion, and after a restful night met on the following morning to produce its three- or four-column report. Western India was slowly recovering from the famine of 1896-7, but it was unnoticed in the paper save for a line or two once a week drawn from the Government

gazette. The great plague epidemic was upon the city, shaking society to its foundations and rapidly spreading to the mofussil with devastating effects. Save for the barest official statistics, it might have been in the Siberian tundra.

World news was furnished by Reuter's agency, an admirable objective service, with the careful accuracy it always maintained, but with cable charges of a shilling a word it was little more than a hundred words a day. Reduced to this pemmican form, it was not infrequently unintelligible and Reuter's representative would come round to the office with the plaintive inquiry whether we could make head or tail of some message.

The great event of the week was mail day. The Peninsular and Oriental Company had by this time established its regular mail service, and the incoming steamer could be confidently anticipated on the Friday or Saturday. The mails themselves—by far the largest which were handled by the G.P.O.—were transported by special train from London to Brindisi, sorted by a travelling staff between Aden and Bombay, and delivered in special bags within an hour of the arrival of the steamer. Then there was a hectic study of the London newspapers to learn what lay behind the scanty cabled news—still solemnly announced day by day as “By Electric Telegraph”—and to provide fodder for the week. This was the sub-editor's opportunity and it is with some pride I recall the verdict that *The Times of India* was the best sub-edited paper in India. Those were the days of the *Overland Mail*, a substantial compilation of all the news of the week, prepared by one of the travel agencies and printed in London for circulation amongst hundreds of subscribers avid for knowledge of what was taking place in the motherland.

So again what was to be done about it? Here the lesson of a harsh apprenticeship bore good fruit. There was more than an air of mild surprise amongst the reporting staff when the edict went forth that every event up to midnight had to find its place in the next issue of the paper. “Oh, sir, it cannot be done and it never has been done!” “It cannot be done; well I will do it myself,” and that settled the matter once and for all. How dangerous it was to take over the task unless you

were fully confident that you could do it. I invaded the placid leader-writing of Bennett with a revolutionary suggestion. "I am doing little or nothing here. Yet the city is ravaged by plague. Poona is deserted and still shaken by the murder of Rand and Ayerst.<sup>1</sup> The Black Death has swept over Sholapur, Surat and Ahmedabad, and it is threatening every other district. The embers of the famine are slowly dying and we have nothing about these great happenings." Bennett asked what was proposed, and it was that he should let me loose on the trouble spots wherever they might be. That was the beginning of travels which ranged from Madras to the Khyber and from Karachi to Mandalay, and even beyond Quetta through the Khojak Tunnel—a knife thrust into the bowels of Afghanistan, in the words of the dour Amir, Abdurrahman Khan—and to New Chaman, where the railway material for a rapid extension to Herat lay stored, if the ever-present Russian menace developed.

The dry bones were stirring. They were soon assembling into a new life. The Knights broke new ground with the *Statesman* in Calcutta. Whether Paul Knight, the head of the family, was inspired by the example of George Newnes and Alfred Harmsworth in the appreciation that a new reading public was growing up in the thousands of matriculates from the universities, or whether it was just the intelligent anticipation of events, is uncertain; he took his courage in both hands, installed modern rotary presses and sold the *Statesman* at a penny. His reward was slow in coming, for his markedly liberal views were not popular with the great business community, who preferred the robustious policy of the *Englishman*. To him must be given the credit of the pioneer of popular journalism in India. Bombay was snapping the strings of its strait-waistcoat. Although a generation had passed since Bartle Frere had thrown down the old ramparts, the land for the natural expansion of the city northwards was possessed by the Government which was still obsessed by the old spirit of

<sup>1</sup> Two officers murdered, when on special plague duty, by two brothers who belonged to a society for "removing obstacles to the Hindu religion." The agitation against the plague restrictions was based on the idea that they outraged the religious susceptibilities of the people.

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hostility to the interlopers, the Government would neither sell nor lease, and the business community was huddled into the purlieus of the old area of the Fort, in conditions already described.

Relief came from accident rather than design. The Government called into being The Improvement Trust to take over from the municipal corporation the task of banishing the slums, revealed in all their horrors by the investigation of the causes of plague—a duty which the Municipality, dominated by the landlords, had shamefully neglected. But the Government was desperately short of capital funds and was in no position to make a cash grant to the Trust to enable it to get on with the immense task. In lieu thereof it made over to the Trust large areas of Government land, with the right to develop them and make as much profit as it could before ceding these areas to the Municipality. Avid of revenue, the Trust at once offered ninety-nine-year leases to all who would accept its strict conditions, and *The Times of India* at long last secured ten thousand square yards on terms so favourable that at the height of the boom which followed the First World War the value of the lease was estimated at £150,000. On that land it erected offices and its own building, with ample accommodation, and a spacious ground-floor factory. So much for the material side.

The brains! Experienced newspaper man as he was, and a leader-writer who never made a serious mistake, Bennett was no journalist. On a Saturday morning he would spread out the huge sheet which was the form of the paper, and if there were three or four solid columns on a single subject, with a cross-heading or two, he breathed a sigh of satisfaction at its excellence.

The greatest journalist who served in India was Lovat Fraser. What is a journalist? Surely he is the man who can see the events of the day with clarity and insight, sum them up in nervous English, and present them to his readers in words which arrest their attention and leave a clear impress on even the most casual. In these powers Lovat Fraser was unsurpassed, either in India or possibly in Britain. After he retired from India he was a brilliant leader-writer and special

correspondent on *The Times* and a powerful contributor to two of the most widely circulated of the national newspapers. He made the largest income ever won by the pen as distinguished from the administrative side of journalism.

In the early 'twenties, Geoffrey Dawson, then at the height of his powers as editor of *The Times*, remarked in the course of conversation: "Lovat is making £20,000 a year." In the pleasant home which he made for a brief period on the borders of the Lloyd George estate at Churt, I challenged Fraser on the subject.

"No," he said. "No, I am not making £20,000 a year. Let me see how much it is," and after a rapid calculation he arrived at the figure of £16,500.

His standard was a simple one. No article, he used to say, is good which does not arrest the attention of the reader in the first sentence, and fails to leave a clear impression on his mind by the time he reaches the last. The true journalist is the man of the day. Is there not the classic remark of Delane of *The Times* to John Bright? Said Bright: "Mr. Delane, *The Times* of today says so and so, but that is very different from *The Times* of yesterday." And Delane's retort: "Mr. Bright, I am responsible for *The Times* of today and *The Times* of tomorrow; I have nothing to do with *The Times* of yesterday."

The power to discern the shape of things to come? That is another quality; it belongs to the statesman rather than to the journalist. For two decades at least there was no more powerful working journalist than Valentine Chirol, the great Berlin correspondent of *The Times*, and afterwards its foreign director. But he was a man with a statesmanlike mind who had drifted into journalism. The range of his intellect is indicated in his forgotten books on the alliance with Japan, the unrest in India and Egypt; these have little in common with the journalism of 1951.

If it was a fortunate breeze which blew Lovat Fraser into the offices of *The Times of India*, it was an equally favourable zephyr which wafted E. G. Pearson to Bombay. Here again the amateur was supplanted by the expert. Trained in the lively school of Gale and Polden at Aldershot, Pearson was



master of his craft. There was little or nothing in the mechanics of printing and its associated activities that he did not know. Once he was firmly seated in the saddle as managing director, he remorselessly scrapped the antiquated machinery which cluttered up the production floor and installed the best which could be had. He discarded competition for the rough-and-tumble output, which any Indian press with a decrepit Wharfedale and an oil engine could produce as well—or as badly—and at prices which defied honest competition. Under his direction the three-colour work of the press challenged comparison with the best in Britain, and when the demand for illustrated journalism was made manifest boldly launched into photogravure with tremendous success.

Lovat Fraser raised *The Times of India* from the status of a respectable provincial newspaper into an Indian organ of opinion which won from Lord Curzon, not given to hasty praise, the tribute that it was the leading paper of Asia: Pearson converted a primitive printing equipment into a press where the best was only just good enough. Still two things were lacking—an issue price which would serve the widest circle of readers and a news service which would embrace the English-speaking world.

The absentee proprietors who owned the paper and the press were slow to be convinced. Happening to be home on leave in 1912 I took counsel with them in this wise. "You have all the discredit of charging fourpence for each copy of the paper and very few will pay fourpence for a single issue. At the same time you are not getting fourpence or anything like it; the subscriber pays a little over twopence and still thinks he is mulcted in fourpence. The circulating libraries furnish copies at twopence or less. You miss the big market which is ripe for service. Now if you ask me to believe that it is good business to have the disrepute of charging fourpence when you are getting so much less, and at the same time to miss the expanding public, I cannot agree." Bennett and his partners thought a bit and then asked what was proposed; should the price be reduced to twopence? "Not for one moment; it is a penny or fourpence; twopence is the same tariff in another

form. Come down to the penny and I guarantee a fourfold increase in the circulation in three months." Reluctantly they agreed, and faced the cost of converting the machines from the cheap flatbed anachronism printing direct from the type, to the rotary presses and stereotyping in a sub-tropical climate. The fourfold rise in circulation was not in three months but in three days, and there was no looking back. In its Bombay and Delhi editions *The Times of India* now has a circulation of more than a hundred thousand a day.

A comprehensive news service was still lacking and for that we had to await an extraneous influence. In his travels abroad Sir Harry Brittain observed that whilst many British newspaper men visited the homeland, very few overseas journalists of standing came to Britain. His fertile and restless mind conceived the project of an Imperial Press Conference, which should be attended by representative journalists from every part of the Commonwealth and Empire to take counsel together and with the leaders of thought in Britain.

This bold idea was adopted with enthusiasm by the Great Ones of the Home Press, who not only loosened their purse strings to provide liberal funds, but their hearts and their homes. Such was the first Imperial Press Conference of 1909. Every important newspaper in the Commonwealth and Empire sent a distinguished representative; every leading statesman addressed the conference in open or secret session—Crewe, Sydney Buxton, McKenna, Cromer, Balfour, Birrell, Winston Churchill and Milner. The Admiralty staged a great review of the Fleet; the Army a demonstration at Aldershot; King Edward received the delegates at Marlborough House. In retrospect, those who promoted this conference builded more surely than they knew; this immense diffusion of knowledge of Britain and its policies, of the Dominions and the Colonies was a powerful influence for unity of effort and sacrifice when the gauntlet was thrown down by Germany five years later.

We were a happy family representing India, strengthened by the inclusion of Ceylon and the Straits Settlements, and fortified by the trumpet voice of Surendranath Bannerji, then controlling the *Bengali*.

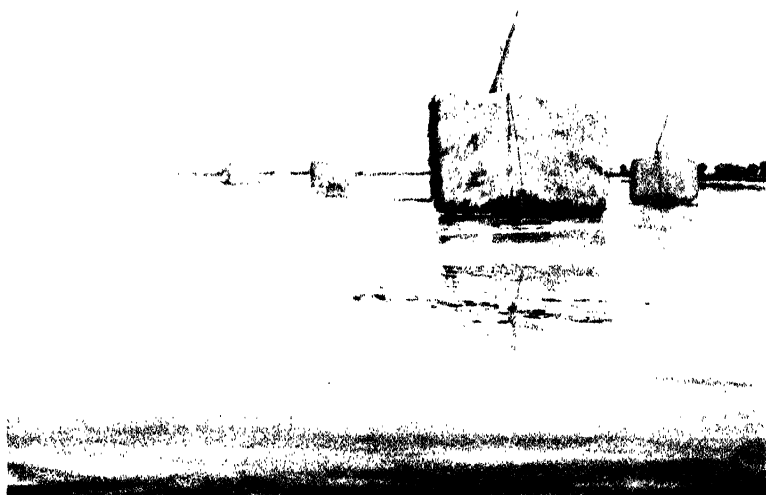
We placed communications in the forefront of our programme, and there was an illuminating sidelight to that. The Australian news service was controlled by a powerful group of newspapers, and admissions into this arcana were grudgingly sanctioned. The Australian delegates had travelled via Canada, and if it would be exaggerating to say they were opposed to cheap cablegrams, certainly they were lukewarm, and of this India was warned in advance. So when we met in preliminary session to decide the programme for the conference proper the mildest of non-committal motions on this topic was submitted for approval. India rose in emphatic protest, declaring that if we had gathered from the four quarters of the globe to pass a milk-and-water resolution then we should be the laughing-stock of the Empire. Geoffrey Dawson, then of the *Star* in Johannesburg and afterwards the brilliant editor of *The Times*, came to our aid, with Theodore Fink, who stood for the rebel Press of Australia. There was no slight flutter of the doves. What were we going to do about it? We left the delegates under no illusions; if this flapdoodle went forth as the official motion of the conference, then we should move an amendment couched in the strongest terms and force it to a division. Humph! That would never do; so India was left to formulate the official resolution which was unanimously accepted.

The case presented by India at the conference may be re-stated, both because of its permanent importance and because of the light it throws on the journalism of the 'nineties.

"Our proposition affirms that the cheapening and improving of Imperial telegraphic communications are a paramount necessity. Those words have been designedly used. There may be many who question the appropriateness of the phrase in view of the great issues connected with Imperial defence which we shall have to discuss. We should be the last to undervalue the importance of common action for Imperial defence between every section of the Empire. But we place freer telegraphic action first because it is absolutely essential to the success of every scheme for common Imperial action. You cannot build up a durable Empire on ignorance; you cannot



SCARLET AND GOLD: THE DANCING GIRL.



BORNE ON THE FLOWING TIDE



THE GRACE AND BEAUTY OF THE DANCE



THE HOUR OF EASE IN THE ZENANA



WILD FLOWERS ON THE WESTERN GHATS



MY LOW VERANDAH'D HOUSE BESIDE THE SEA

solve intricate problems affecting peoples thousands of miles apart on misunderstandings and half-understandings. . . .

"The conditions under which India is now kept in telegraphic touch with the outer world can only be described as grotesque. The rate for private telegrams is two shillings a word; for Press telegrams one. The fruits of this heavy tariff are not a little curious. Code on code has been elaborated until the open private message is in danger of becoming as extinct as the dodo; the Press telegram is so short that we see overseas affairs as through a glass darkly. In every other part of the world news is considered of so much public importance that it is entitled to a specially cheap rate. In India the use of the modern code has reduced the cost of the private telegram to little more than twopence a word. On the most conservative computation the cost of every word of news is between ninepence and tenpence. . . . Small wonder is it then that the news from the Dominions comes to India only in unrecognizable fragments, and the picture of India represented in large sections of the English Press sometimes cannot be recognized as the land we live in. In the case of India that is not only an enormous inconvenience, but a serious Imperial menace. The lie has the wings of the wind; the truth is shod with lead. Many a half-truth or untruth, flashed across the wires, has never found its antidote and has helped to breed that atmosphere of distrust and suspicion which we are all trying to disperse. . . . How are you going to guide the democracy on the affairs of India at a shilling a word?"

The aftermath was impressive. Friends asked what was the goal, and we replied that we demanded sixpence a word, but would accept ninepence as an instalment. The ninepenny rate was conceded before the conference was over and soon it came down to fourpence. Yet another service was rendered by the Indian Delegation. It inspired the conference to urge the importance of an Imperial wireless chain, and to a weighty deputation Asquith lent a sympathetic ear. For its realization we had to wait for a decade or more, not because of weakness in the case, but the smear of later scandals filled politicians with holy terror of anything associated with Marconi. The ball thus set rolling kept moving. Out of the conference



developed the Empire Press Union, warmed and encouraged by the personal interest of the wise and kindly Lord Burnham, and after his death by Colonel J. J. Astor, the great gentleman who happily is with it today. Following the precedent of forty years ago at all subsequent conferences, at home and in the Dominions, the Union has resolutely stood for one dominant principle—a Commonwealth, one and indivisible. After ceaseless pressure it won the Commonwealth Press rate of a penny a word, and the Commonwealth Deferred Air Mail at one-half of the standard charge.

Two sidelights: Lord Rosebery, who struck the keynote of the conference when in a classic oration at the opening banquet he used the pregnant words "Welcome Home," entertained a dozen or so of the delegates at dinner in his Berkeley Square home. What a prince of hosts he was. The silvern hair, the fresh complexion, the golden voice, the charm and wit left an ineffaceable impression.

One of the company in the course of conversation remarked: "My lord, that was a noble address with which you greeted us; pray, do you speak extempore?" "Speak extempore," exclaimed Rosebery, "that speech represented three months' thought. For all those weeks I had it in mind; for the last fortnight I went to Durdans and thought of nothing else." Later, in the House of Commons, listening with unutterable boredom to the sloppy irrelevancies of back-benchers—and sometimes of Ministers—the thought uppermost was that if Rosebery was ready to devote all this care to the preparation of a speech, what impertinence it was for men without a fraction of his experience and talent to inflict themselves unprepared on their fellow-members. Later, talking over this dinner with Moberly Bell of *The Times*, Rosebery said he carried away only one idea from his dinner; and that came from a fellow who said one could not instruct a democracy at a shilling a word. "Right and proper," was Bell's retort; "that fellow is the senior correspondent of *The Times* in India."

These developments went far beyond professional interests. India was surging with new ideas, new hopes, new ambitions; the leaven of higher education in the English language was working; the increasing contact with the democratic institu-

tions of the West was bringing her to the stage when the demand for self-government in the words of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report was bound to arise. A great step forward was taken in the Morley-Minto reforms of 1909, which admitted India to the Executive Councils; expanded the legislative councils and increased their powers; and added to the electorate. The time was ripe for a Press which would fully record world events and mirror the greater political activities which were stirring the land. The need was met, and by the time politics dominated the scene there was a newspaper Press which presented to the larger reading public a complete record of the news of the world and fully depicted the domestic scene.

## THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

DYNAMITE: AN EXPLOSIVE SUBSTANCE AND HAVING  
A DISRUPTIVE FORCE ESTIMATED AT ABOUT EIGHT  
TIMES THAT OF GUNPOWDER

*English Dictionary*

ON TO THIS complacent and—the term is used with all respect—very well-satisfied bureaucratic structure there was suddenly thrust the dynamic personality of Lord Curzon.

It is impossible at this distance of time to appreciate the intensity of the interest aroused by his appointment to the Viceroyalty. We of the editorial staff of *The Times of India* were politically suckled on his standard works: *Problems of the Far East*, *The Russians in Central Asia*, and had pored over the two classic volumes on Persia, which form an imperishable monument to his intense industry and knowledge. Alas, the continuing book on Afghanistan which was to have enshrined his visit to the dour, heavy-handed Amir Abdurrahman Khan was never published; the material had to be put aside with his appointment and was never fully used!

His actual landing was rather a shock. Sitting amongst the great throng of all that was distinguished in India, when he set foot on the Apollo Bunder, where generations of Britons landed and left India's shores, I looked for the pale ascetic of earlier photographs and saw a robust, erect figure, with a fresh complexion and a touch of side whisker—the man of action, not the student. No Viceroy came to India so richly endowed; no Viceroy brought to his high office equal powers of sustained work; no Viceroy was equally imbued with a passionate desire to serve the land he loved and the Empire of which he was so proud. How far did that work endure? Great world events have almost overwhelmed us; the irresistible surge of India towards full nationhood has relegated adminis-

trative issues to the background; but in the storied pages which record the wonderful connexion of Britain with India none are richer in achievement than those which tell of the first five years of Curzon's régime.

Curzon has not been fortunate in his biographers. His memory was to have been preserved by his able friend and admirable private secretary, Walter Lawrence, but, busied with other affairs, he could not undertake the task. The material, placed at the disposal of Lovat Fraser, fructified in the able and balanced volume, *India Under Curzon and After*. Unfortunately, Fraser placed the partition of Bengal first amongst Curzon's achievements, and with the ill-luck which dogged his later years, within a few weeks of the book being published, the partition was undone when His Majesty the King announced at Delhi the re-shaping of the eastern provinces and the removal of the seat of government from Calcutta to Delhi. 'The know-alls not unnaturally said that if Curzon's greatest work had to be drastically refashioned so soon after his departure, not much remained. Fraser was warned at the time of his error, that to pin Curzon's reputation on a single administrative act in a changing world was unjust. Curzon's transcendental service was that he made men think, that he aroused the spirit of divine discontent, an impatience of anything but the attainable best. With all respect to one whose Governorship of Bengal left memories of a golden age, Lord Ronaldshay's Indian chapters in the standard memoir do not reflect the spirit of Curzon's reforms. The fact is that none who lived and worked in India from 1897 to 1947 can feel other than strengthened and encouraged by the recollection of what Englishmen have done in fulfilment of their vast responsibilities.

Curzon arrived with a programme of twelve reforms, soon expanded to twenty-four; but these represent only a fraction of the works to which he set his hand. What of that work? Few will agree, because the episode is forgotten, yet it will be safe to say that the most characteristic achievement was in relation to what must always be the dominant force in an eastern agricultural community—the land. For generations land revenue policy was the subject of bitter controversy.

The Government was charged with taking an undue share of the produce of the soil; with the harsh collection of the revenue in bad years as in good; with impoverishing the cultivators; and indeed in being more exacting than the Moghuls in the golden days of Akbar and Todar Mal.

Curzon established contact with Romesh Chunder Dutt, an able Civil Servant, very critical of the Government's fiscal policy, and invited him and his friends to state their case in a series of open letters from each of the provinces. These published, Curzon bade his very competent Revenue colleague prepare the rejoinder. He was not satisfied with the draft and rewrote it in his own hand—a remarkable *tour de force*. It was a complete and convincing answer to the major charges, in language so lucid that it carried conviction; but it was not merely polemic, for there were pregnant decisions on flexibility in the revenue demand to meet famine and flood. From that hour land revenue disappeared from the arena of controversy, and, with modifications, the principles stand. If that work had stood alone Curzon might have felt justified. But of course it did not stand alone. His eagle eye ranged over every department of the administrative system with a single purpose—to establish policy, clear definite policy, and not mere empiricism. Whilst admirable work had been done in many departments of the State, it was well-nigh impossible to discern a clear and enduring purpose in any branch of the administration.

It may be of profit even at this distance, and amid all the changed political conditions, to glance at some of these policies. We had no clear idea as to what we were doing on the North-west Frontier; millions were spent on expeditions, with nothing but loss to the territories affected and a continual drain on an inadequate exchequer. Curzon withdrew British forces from advanced and isolated positions; made the tribesmen responsible for their own defence with strong forces ready to support them; and established the North-west Frontier Province, working under the direct control of the Government of India, to ensure that these principles were observed. Critics have claimed that this policy broke down when the Frontier blazed anew in 1919, but that failure, if

failure it was, sprang from the neglect of his essential principles, and from treating the irregulars as a covering force instead of a militia. The foundation of Indian economy is the land, from which seventy-five per cent of the people draw their livelihood; with the revenue system out of the way the ground was prepared for a systematic development of irrigation. Whilst great and beneficial works had been constructed in every province there was no scheme of co-ordinated development.

Scott Moncrieff was brought from Egypt to head a commission of inquiry which prepared a programme; the execution and development of these works constitute a monument to the British connexion which, if it were better known, would be ranked amongst the wonders of the modern world. That was only the beginning; fortified by a donation of £40,000 from a generous American friend, Mr. Phipps, the Central Agricultural Institute was established at Pusa, and there was inaugurated the scientific study of the staple crops which vastly improved the strains of wheat and cotton and sugarcane, swelling the agricultural wealth of India. The railways were brought under a Central Board; the universities reformed and placed under the control of educationists; the Police were overhauled, with improved pay and place made for the entry of educated recruits to quicken a Force built up on promotion from the ranks.

Those are a few examples taken almost at random from an impressive list of beneficent reforms. Nothing was more noteworthy than the close attention Curzon paid to the development of commerce and industry. Those who surveyed the imposing fabric of bureaucratic administration often asked themselves whether a Civil Service, recruited on a literary test, composed of able men who had no knowledge of economics, of trade and finance and of local-governing institutions, formed the best instrument for the creation of revenue as distinct from the collection of taxes and the administration of justice.

One of Curzon's early acts was to establish a Department of Commerce, but this was one of his disappointments, for he desired to place a business man, not an official, at the head.

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Unfortunately, the individual marked down had to confess that his own business activities were so unsuccessful that it would be folly to place on a commercial failure the task of telling others how they should do their job; and the department fell under Service control. Nor did he hesitate to use the means that lay to his hand for the protection of Indian interests within the framework of a revenue tariff. India was being flooded with bounty-fed beet sugar from the Continent whilst its own great cane industry languished: he clapped on a countervailing duty and smashed this illegitimate competition. France threatened a penal duty on Indian coffee, but had better thoughts when it was made clear that any such action would be met with differential duties on French wines. When the views of the Government were sought on Chamberlain's scheme for preferential tariffs throughout the Commonwealth and Empire, Curzon placed Indian interests first and insisted that they should not be overborne.

It is a sweeping statement to make, yet I am convinced that it is no more than the barest truth, that there was not a department in the complex administrative machine which was handed over to a free and independent Indian republic which was not the better, the more efficient, the more vividly inspired by pride of service as the result of Curzon's labour for what he profoundly believed was India's good. Sometimes it was objected that he rushed these drastic changes. No charge could be more unjust. On all major issues the ground was carefully explored by expert commissions which surveyed the whole field, and if legislation was necessary it was hammered out by long debate in the legislative councils; indeed, so all-embracing was the scope of these commissions that, it was argued, they might form a substitute for parliamentary government. Yet it may well be asked why this titanic work is well-nigh forgotten; that if Curzonian memories persist they are almost entirely linked with his failures—the partition of Bengal and the dispute over military administration which led to his resignation? First, a footnote to the history of the latter episode.

It is hard to understand how a statesman of Curzon's stature could have seriously argued, in his controversy with Lord

Kitchener, that the Viceroy, in his capacity as supreme Commander-in-Chief, must have a second *military* opinion on all that concerned the Army; that there must stand between the Commander-in-Chief and the Viceroy, with his supreme responsibilities for defence, another military officer, of necessity a junior military officer, to advise when the Commander-in-Chief was right and wrong.

All these issues are set out in detail in the acrid and hapless papers relating to the episode. What is not disclosed is the background to the dispute. The relations between the Military Member of Council and the Commander-in-Chief formed the subject of repeated protest by successive Commanders-in-Chief—Roberts, Stuart and White—and for patent reasons. The Commander-in-Chief was an Extraordinary Member of the Council; in other words, he was present as of right only at the meetings of that body; all papers had to go through the Military Member, with constant access to the ear of the Viceroy; between the Viceroy as the head of the State and the Commander-in-Chief the head of the Army there interposed this junior officer, with his privileged position. Nor was that all by any means. A system which aroused protest in normal conditions was accentuated before Kitchener arrived.

There was a hiatus between his appointment and his assumption of office due to his detention in South Africa to wind up the Boer War. During that period Sir Power Palmer, an officer of the old school, was acting Commander-in-Chief with all the limitations of a temporary appointment, and it was not until the close of his career that, as a compliment, he was confirmed in the appointment. It so happened that in these years the post of Military Member was held by an officer of exceptional capacity, Sir Edmond Elles, who drew into his office far greater authority, perhaps necessarily so, than any of his predecessors; a system which chafed successive commanders-in-chief was greatly intensified. It was even reported that on a minor matter like the appointment of a captain to the mounted infantry in Somaliland the Commander-in-Chief was overruled.

There is vivid in my memory a talk with Smith-Dorrien



round a blazing fire in the Residency at Quetta during the visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales in 1906; he was then commanding the Quetta Division following a spell as Adjutant-General. Said Smith-Dorrien: "I found myself as Adjutant-General in an impossible position. I had no real authority, for everything was subject to the veto of the Military Member. So I went to Power Palmer and said: 'P.P., I am going to resign.' P.P. pressed me to stay, at least until his own retirement, and I agreed on one condition—that I should be given short leave in order to tell K. how his hands were being tied. This was agreed and off I went to London and told K. how he was being committed before he took office. 'Humph,' said K.; jumped into a cab and charged down to the India Office, and returning said: 'I have put a stop to that.'"

All this hapless controversy would never have arisen if the illogical but useful rule limiting the tenure of the Viceroyalty to five years had been adhered to and if the Home Government had not yielded, with a reluctance patent in the official records, to Curzon's insistent pressure for another five years of office in order to carry on the work to which he had set his hand.

Kitchener, resolved as he was on pruning the powers of the Military Member, powers which had swollen in the special conditions preceding his arrival, was quite prepared to wait until Curzon's term had expired when he could take up the matter with his successor. Then it would have been considered in a tranquil atmosphere, and a reasoned reform would have been carried through without friction. But when K. learnt that Curzon would remain for another term, embracing most of his own normal period as Commander-in-Chief, naturally he was not content to remain placid—yet one more illustration of the unwisdom of extensions of office with which the administrative history of India abounds. None had then the temerity to propose the obvious solution, the appointment of a civilian as head of the Army Department for the purposes of supply and so forth, leaving the Commander-in-Chief supreme in the field of command. Military influence was far too strong for the most courageous to suggest

such a course; even the heroic hesitates before the risk of facing a firing squad on the barrack square.

Of course, when the First World War came, and there was the breakdown in Mesopotamia, the Curzonites purred with satisfaction and used the most unpleasant words in the English language—"I told you so." The hapless events in Mesopotamia had no more to do with the changes in the administration of the Army than the flowers that bloom in the spring. The real causes of the breakdown, so far as it can be told with respect for the dead, will be indicated in the pages describing India at war.

How came it then that Curzon's great work for the keying up of the administration of India is forgotten; that of those who pass his statue on the Calcutta *maidan* or in Carlton Gardens, not one in a thousand could write so much as half a sheet of notepaper about what he did and what were the fruits? It is not that India is ungrateful; very much the contrary. No Englishman has served in India, and sought to identify himself with the spirit and interests of India, without memories of kindness and affection far beyond his deserts.

Many influences contributed to this neglect. Perhaps the strongest of them is that his immense talents were directed to working for India rather than with India. Frequently he turned to his wise friend, Walter Lawrence, and said: "Let us get the machine on the right rails, then all will be well." He forgot that it is not enough to get the machine on the right rails; it is necessary to furnish the dynamic forces that will drive it forward. He did not seek, nor did he envisage, a development of popular government which would supply this continuing motive power. Not that, save in purely administrative matters, he rushed his reforms. On major issues, such as the reform of the universities, the reorganization of the police and the development of irrigation, the ground was laboriously prepared by expert investigation. Twice he challenged the powerful military interest by a stand for justice and for the honour of India, which redounded to his credit; in the heated debate in the House of Lords on Jhallianwalla Bagh he stood four-square against his own Party for humanity and justice.

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Perhaps the explanation lies in this. His most enduring reforms affected the peasant and the industrialist, who were not politically vocal. In grappling with the deficiencies of the university system and in the partition of Bengal he touched on the raw the intelligentsia and the powerful lawyer caste who dominated the political scene. If he had remained in India for the extended term of his Viceroyalty would he have associated himself with the insistent demand for constitutional development in the direction of self-government? That is one of the unanswered questions of history. Probably not. The very thought of a parliamentary system was beyond his ken; he could not conceive of an India which was not an integral part of the British Empire, or of any form of government which was not of the British Raj, if increasingly efficient and benevolent and yet ever more closely directed to India's good. Yet there is this fact. At the critical session of the Indian National Congress in 1915 the President, the distinguished Lord Sinha, pleaded for a goal and a policy. That challenge was accepted by Sir Austen Chamberlain, the Secretary of State, who resolutely rejected any plan of constitutional development which did not embody the element of responsibility. Austen Chamberlain was the real author of the declaration of August, 1917, when for the first time in the history of the British connexion our goal was defined—the establishment of responsible government. No Englishman can understand any form of responsible government which does not accord with an executive responsible to the legislature, and the legislature responsible to the electorate. That word "responsible," the keynote of British policy from that date forward to the final decision to vest Indian destinies in Indian hands, was written into the original draft by Curzon himself.

It now appears there is reason to conclude that Curzon was fortunate in the events which induced the abrupt termination of his term of office. Wrong, entirely wrong, as I am convinced he was in maintaining with such vehemence the argument that for the discharge of his constitutional functions the Viceroy must have at his beck and call a junior officer sitting in judgment over the Commander-in-Chief, yet if this con-

troversy had not impelled his resignation what must have happened? The progressive deterioration of his influence and reputation. His autocratic spirit had grown with the exercise of the immense powers of the viceroyalty; hence the impolicy of departing from the rule which limited the office to five years, illogical as that might seem. Sir Walter Lawrence had left India. The trusted colleagues in his Cabinet, with their sense of independence arising from the knowledge that they had nothing more to expect in their official careers, had departed and their places had been taken by new men, owing their promotion to viceregal favour.

His health was declining and the immense labours he imposed on himself wrought an increasing irritability and impatience of criticism and opposition. Witness the episode which caused so much exasperation, when he hastened from an acrid debate in the legislature to a meeting of the Convocation of Calcutta University and descanted on the oriental disregard of western standards of truthfulness. It was only and slowly learnt later that his relations with the Home Government were grievously strained, that they accepted with great reluctance his demand for a fresh term of office and resented his attempts to dictate policy rather than be the instrument of executing policy. In these circumstances the ensuing years would have been a period of frustration and exasperation, a decline in reputation, a diminishing power for good. Whereas his resignation, because he was not supported against Kitchener, enabled him to leave India in a blaze of glory as the arch-defender of the supremacy of the civil power. The reaction came afterwards.

Looking back on the tremendous days of Curzon's viceroyalty, I am firmly confirmed in the opinion that at his best he was the greatest man in the British Empire. In the range of his intellect, the majestic sweep of his mind and tremendous capacity for work he had no equal. Yet it is a reflection on the frailty of human nature that he wore himself out with unnecessary work.

In a very inadequate account of his own Indian years Lord Hardinge recalls his anxiety lest his resources should be unequal to the financial strain of the viceroyalty. "Lord

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Curzon, to enlighten me, invited me to Hackwood, where he showed me an enormous ledger containing all the accounts of his viceroyalty written in his own hand. No wonder he had to work fourteen hours a day. I was quite reassured and still more so when Lord Lansdowne told me that during his term of office in India he had saved £20,000 of his salary. I may mention here that during the whole of my time in India I saw my accounts only once and then from curiosity."

There is a vivid and illuminating picture of Curzon sitting down at Montacute writing to his wife, and complaining that, after grappling with a ceaseless rain of red boxes from the Foreign Office, he had to write to the landlord about repairs to the roof of the coal shed.

How sensitive he was to any breath of criticism! This experience may seem unbelievable, but it is true. During the sessions of the first Imperial Press Conference there was a big lunch at the Constitutional Club and my seat as chairman of the Indian Delegation lay between Curzon's and that of the Earl of Coventry. Curzon was a few minutes late, and turning to the right, then to the left, he at once held forth. "I have been waiting for some time to meet you; I have a serious complaint against your newspaper. Commenting on the debate on Afghanistan you indulged in sharp criticism of my speech in the Lords; later when the full text of that speech reached India I did not find that retraction to which I was entitled." Well! Well! One would have concluded that this trifling matter had been rankling in his mind for years, for he could not have known he would be placed next me; the Curzonian voice and manner must be known for a real appreciation of his plaint. Perhaps it was mischievous, but I could not forbear the retort. "Would you, sir, like to know the story of that article?" "I should," came the sonorous reply. "I wrote that article. I was staying with the Governor of Bombay at Poona when it was published. On my return my colleagues said: 'Why on earth did you let Curzon down so lightly?' I told them I knew the debate was prearranged between Morley and yourself; therefore you must have been misinterpreted in the cabled version as you could not have used very controversial language." "Indeed," retorted Curzon, "perhaps I am thinking

of another occasion"—which I am told is about as near an apology as would emerge from an ex-Viceroy. Possibly there was this excuse. My predecessor could see no spots on the Curzonian sun; the paper was a doormat for him to walk upon; and the merest hint of criticism seemed the sting of a jellyfish.

When Curzon introduced his drastic Official Secrets Act I was urged by my editorial colleagues to join in vehement protest and declined; the paper did not mean to publish official secrets and was not interested. "You are mistaken," they urged. "You will get nothing out of Curzon except at the muzzle of the revolver."

Is there any foundation for the stories which went round the Foreign Office in Curzon's last years, that when he had produced a note, an admirable note without doubt, he regarded the matter as done? It would indeed be an amazing sequel if the Viceroy who waged incessant war against paper work in India fell a victim to the disease in his later days.

Unless an Amurath an Amurath succeed! Lord Minto was no Amurath. Even if he had been. India was no field for further explosive energy and times had changed; above all a period of consolidation was needed, and that was not permitted. Great changes were occurring in the political field. The long period of Conservative governance in Britain had been succeeded by the Liberal landslide in 1906. Lord Morley had taken charge of the India Office. Everyone who looked ahead realized that substantial progress would be made in the structure of the Indian constitutional system; that it would no longer be a matter of re-fashioning the administrative machine, but a radical adjustment of the means of focusing Indian opinion on the policy of government.

Well do I recall discussing with Lovat Fraser, who was then editing *The Times of India*, the prospect which lay ahead, suggesting that, the vivid interest of the Curzon epoch having passed, we should set about ways and means of keeping alive the contents of the newspaper. We were soon undeceived. The first outbreak of revolutionary activity shook the community to the core in the assassination by bomb of the Judge and his wife at Midnapore. The governance of India had never been

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easy; there was always some disturbing force—the Frontier, famine, plague. This was a new and sinister feature. Since the murder of Rand and Ayerst at Poona there had been no outbreak of revolutionary crime, and investigation showed that these murders were not the fruit of any deep conspiracy but the individual act of a Chitpavan Brahmin unhinged by lying stories of British oppression during the operations to counter the outbreak of plague. Britons had gone about their occasions free from any sense of fear; now the demoralizing sense of danger corrupted and poisoned the atmosphere.

Often in my excursions o' nights through the bazaars of Bombay I thought of the ease with which one could be done to death and none have known of it until after dawn. One experience is illustrative. I was alone in my small house on Malabar Hill, engaged in early urgent work in a side verandah until those small hours in the morning when vitality is at its lowest ebb. There was a loud bang, followed by the splintering of glass. Now I am for it was the natural thought, and I sought a lethal weapon before going forth to do battle with the intruder.

Never in my years in India did I keep a firearm in my bungalow, and nothing lay ready to the hand save a flat-iron and a large clothes-brush. So armed, I sallied forth, but soon comprehension dawned. Returning late I had left my car in the *porte cochère* and there was a dicky tyre; a small piece had blown out of the cover and shattered the panes of the french windows. A trifling story perhaps, but typical of the uncase induced by the cult of assassination. If this occurred in a great city like Bombay, with its large British population and ample resources for the maintenance of law and order, it can be well imagined how deep were the anxieties of officials in the remoter country districts and their women folk, especially in the disturbed tracts of Bengal and the centres of Brahminical resurgence in the Bombay Deccan. Tribute is due to the calm, resolute courage with which they went about their work and put fear behind them.

This is not the place to appraise the work of Mr. Gandhi, but in passing it may be said that high amongst the services he rendered to India was his determination to bring political

activity into the open and ban the cult of murder with all the weight of his authority.

The development of the constitutional structure of the Government of India, beginning with what are known as the Morley-Minto reforms, belongs to another chapter; Morley had his own way of exercising his supreme authority as Secretary of State. He was vehement in his criticisms of the Minto régime in private correspondence; much more restrained when it came to official despatches which were on record. As an example, I recall Sir John Jenkins, the Home Member, telling me that infinite distress had been caused to the chivalrous Viceroy by a letter comparing the Government of India with that of Naples in the worst days of King Bomba. Said Jenkins: "I told Minto to pursue the course we had adopted in Bombay, where we had the right of independent correspondence with the India Office. When Morley was more than usually minatory we used to reply that if these admonitions were put in the form of an official paper reasoned explanations would follow. That usually closed the episode." How deeply Minto felt was disclosed on the day of his official departure from Simla. It was one of those glorious days in October when the climate of Simla is unsurpassed; a sky of the brightest azure without a cloud; a bite in the air when it is a joy to be alive; the eternal snows on the horizon and great beds of hydrangeas in the gardens. There was a small gathering in the grounds of the Viceregal Lodge to say goodbye; a hum of animated conversation, for that morning had arrived the news that Morley had resigned and Lord Crewe had taken his place at the India Office, synchronizing with the appointment of Lord Hardinge as Viceroy. As he passed me near the gate Minto remarked: "I don't wish Charlie Hardinge any harm, but I do wish he had six months of Morley before the advent of Crewe."



## THE STEEL FRAME

BUREAUCRACY: THE SYSTEM OF CENTRALIZING THE  
ADMINISTRATION OF A COUNTRY THROUGH REGULARLY  
GRADED SERIES OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

*Dictionary*

THE INDIAN CIVIL SERVICE at the turn of the century was at the zenith of its power and influence. Echoes of the old controversy between nomination and selection by open competition for recruitment were faintly heard and an occasional sneer at the competition-wallahs disturbed the air; but that was fast dying. There is not the slightest doubt that the establishment of open competition in 1853 gave India men with the best education and character Britain could produce, notwithstanding the fact that in certain instances nomination had produced men of remarkable attainments.

The various "Commissions" were fading. As new areas were brought under British control the personnel was recruited from various sources, chiefly military, such as the Punjab, the Burma, and Sind Commissions; but, as the first original appointments passed by the efflux of time, the places were filled by men drawn from the covenanted service, and on the whole to the advantage of the administration. That term "covenanted" is perhaps little understood. Every member of the Service entered into a covenant with the Secretary of State by which he bound himself not to engage in trade, not to receive presents, and to subscribe for a pension for himself and his family. It was the final stroke against the system where Civil Servants were inadequately paid and compensated themselves by engaging in private trade with all its abuses; and it swept away the occasional practice of indigent ex-officers haunting the headquarters of the old East India Company in Leadenhall Street with petitions for financial relief.

'The new system gave to India the finest corps of administrators any Government has enjoyed. None could come in contact with these Civil Servants without being powerfully impressed by their lofty standard of integrity, their ability and devotion to duty, and their capacity for hard work. More, they set a standard of life and conduct which raised the whole tone of society even in the great towns where there was a strong commercial element. There was not a non-official, even though he might grumble at the dominance of the little "tin gods," who did not find life richer by contact with these distinguished men and who was not refreshed by mingling with the flower of the British universities. Certainly until at least the First World War the Civil Servant brought into the material side of Anglo-Indian life a culture which compensated in no small degree for isolation from the currents of art and thought in Britain; it enriched the literature of India and, though much of this talent is hidden in Settlement and Census reports and gazetteers now forgotten, and in volumes on the administration which are worm-eaten on shelves where they remain monuments to the past, the cultural contribution of these selected men to the nationhood of India is no small part of the service Britain rendered to the land.

Of course, these services were not one-sided. If the Civil Servant bound himself not to engage in trade and not to receive presents where the present to the arriving and parting guest is an historic social custom, he had a hard-and-fast contract which secured the future for himself and his family. In passing, this embargo against the receipt of presents was often pushed to ludicrous proportions. If for any reason an officer of government was the recipient of a trifling gift which could not be returned without discourtesy, it had to be deposited in the *toshinkhana*, or provincial treasury, and if desired redeemed at its estimated value, so there was the occasional event of an officer being called upon, through all the solemn procedure of a secretariat file and a resolution, to pay a few shillings for a silver key. Even the acceptance of fruit and flowers was forbidden and orders on the subject were repeatedly issued. Lord Lloyd, out snipe-shooting with an officer in the Excise Department who was a famous shikari,

found how futile such orders were. At the end of a hot and exhausting morning they returned to camp and, while his host was seeing about breakfast, Lloyd fell upon a basket of oranges which he saw outside a tent. He asked where such fine fruit was to be obtained, and a servant, on being questioned, said they were a present which had just arrived. Much amused by this, Lloyd said to his host: "I suppose orders take a long time to reach you in the districts." They were then at a place which was only an hour or two by car from Bombay.

The pay of the Civil Servant was guaranteed; most of the high and lucrative offices in the administration were specifically reserved for him; his pension of £1,000 a year was assured; and provision for his widow and children laid down by regulations with the force of statute. Hence the current *cliché* that the covenanted civilian was worth £300 a year—the widow's pension—dead or alive. From the moment of his appointment he was member of a Chosen and Select Brotherhood—a tight and fast corpus, with appeal only from pig to pork. On joining he was posted as assistant to the Collector and District Magistrate—the Head of the District of Kipling and G. W. Steevens—pages writ much in the 'ercles vein—who was a covenanted civilian. On promotion he came under the Commissioner—chief of several districts—who also was a covenanted civilian.

At each stage as he passed up the ladder the same conditions prevailed—the Commissioner bowed only to the member of the Executive Council, and the Provincial Government to the Government of India; in the rare cases where a decision was reserved to the Secretary of State he was guided by his own Members of the India Council, unless a politician of exceptional independence, that is, by the Civil Service members of that body. True, there were nominal checks on this trade-union practice; in the Presidencies of Madras and Bombay—Bengal did not become a Presidency until 1912—the Governor, brought from Britain, was only *primus inter pares*, but if he overrode his professional colleagues there was appeal to the Government of India and the Secretary of State, or, in other words, to a Civil Service tribunal. Nor was the Civil Service insensible of its special position. In the 'nineties

reverberations of the indignant protest of Sir James Westland, an officer of the old school, against the daring of Pherozeshah Mehta, the tribune of Bombay, in criticizing the Government of India without paying tribute to the transcendent merits of the Civil Service, still echoed through the Secretariats. A little later the storm broke. A Civil Service District and Sessions judge, warped by isolation in his remote headquarters, indulged in lampoons on the High Court in his judgments and was dismissed the Service. Unparalleled act; a Civil Servant to be dismissed for patent incompetence, a moral revolution!

Well might a puzzled world stand a'gaze at the majestic spectacle of the Government of India in the heyday of the Civil Service. Here was a country as large as Europe, without Russia, peopled by a quarter of the human race, heirs to an ancient and great civilization, a mosaic of race and creed separated by a babel of tongues; yet the effective administration was in the hands of a *corps d'élite* never more than a thousand strong in the working cadre, backed by a British Army of fifty thousand or so. Behind this, of course, stood the specialized services—Forests and Public Works, Police and so forth; but power and authority, save for the shadowy control of a remote and erratic Parliament, lay with the Civil Service.

This was the Steel Frame of which at a later stage Lloyd George was to speak. True, there were occasional invasions of the holy of holies—the Executive Council of the Viceroy and Governor-General; a Finance Member brought from Britain might alternate with a Civil Service Member—Law, Clinton Dawkins, Fleetwood Wilson, Basil Blackett, Schuster and James Grigg: these men shed new light on Indian economy, but they, too, were men with the Civil Service tradition. The Law portfolio was occasionally in the hands of a nominee from London, but Britain had little if anything to contribute to India in the form of law, when the finest brains of the rising educated class, lacking other avenues of expression, turned to the Courts and built up great and remunerative practices. The Government of India was the Indian Civil Service and woe betide the iconoclast who dared to lay sacrilegious hands upon it.

Yet those who looked below the surface and discerned the rising tide of Indian nationalism and the growth of new economic forces were bound to ask whether this structure was fully adequate to the changing conditions. The Indian universities, founded to the enduring credit of the British people in the darkest days of the 'fifties, were grafting on Indian society an increasing number of graduates nurtured on English literature, charged with the ichor of political freedom. Not a few of these recipients of the new learning took post-graduate or even graduate courses abroad. What was to be their place in the administration of their own land, beyond the scope of the Provincial Services which were well paid by Indian standards and were rising in ability and honour as they filled with the products of the universities, but were separated from the High-up thousand of the covenanted Civil Service by a well-nigh impassable chasm? There was all the difference in the world between the covenanted and uncovenanted services, to use the old-fashioned term.

In principle, the promise of Queen Victoria's Proclamation, enshrined in Lord Derby's wise words, was fulfilled: "So far as may be, our subjects, of whatever race or creed, be freely and impartially admitted to offices in our service the duties of which they may be qualified to discharge." This was wide as the poles asunder from practice. There was nothing on paper to debar the Indian from competing in the Civil Service examinations; but to do so he had to sit in London and in effect to round off his education at a British university. That was a tremendous gamble. He or his family had to find the ready cash, certainly not less than £1,000. The candidate had to face the risks and dangers of higher education in a foreign country and a severe test in unfamiliar or semi-familiar surroundings. A limited number of Indians won through the ordeal, and some, like Romesh Chunder Dutt, attained high and responsible office. Jamsetji Tata established a system of scholarships whereby a limited number of scholars who had done well at the university were furnished with funds to complete their education in Britain and sit for the examination; but if successful they were expected to refund the advances. So serious was this handicap that in a personnel of twelve

hundred in the early part of this century not more than fifty were natives of the soil, and that small number included some selected members of the Provincial Services.

The risks! These were awe-inspiring. If successful the Indian entrant became a full member of 'The Chosen Brotherhood, with all the rights, privileges and opportunities of the £300 a year alive or dead. But if he failed, even by the smallest of margins, what future was there for him? Little or none to compensate for his sweated strivings. No return for the sacrifices his family had made to give him his chance. Very real were those sacrifices and families often impoverished themselves in the effort, with the expectation that the favoured one would repay them under the joint family system, then an integral part of Indian society.

One instance will illustrate the depressing consequences of failure which came under my personal experience. The candidate was of a good middle-class family known for an honourable stand against oppressive Hindu practices. He missed success by the small margin of six marks and was too old to sit again. He returned to India with high testimonials from the India Office to his character and abilities, and an urgent appeal to the Government of India and the Provincial Government to find him a place equal to his attainments. He failed, and not all the efforts of his friends could properly place him. In the end he could find nothing better than a minor post in an unpopular department. These were the conditions which induced the clamorous demand of the Indian National Congress for simultaneous examinations, to be held in India and in England, which was stubbornly and unwisely resisted. India had to wait for another thirty years and for the investigation of the Lee Commission before the promise of the Queen's Proclamation was fulfilled in the spirit as well as the letter, and not until the Indian Civil Service had lost much of its attractiveness to those who passed high up in the examinations, and had the option of serving at home or abroad. This was one of the many forces behind what was generically called unrest in India, and drove the best brains into the overstaffed practice of the law and into politics.

Yet another doubt crept in. Was this administrative

machine, with all the ability behind it, and the inspiration and responsibility of a Service, adapted to the changed conditions of the land? In the half-century the administrative structure had been perfected. From the humblest tiller of the soil upwards the lives of the community were protected by code and regulation and the rights of man ensured by law crystallized in Criminal and Civil Procedure Codes rivalling the Code Napoleon in completeness, guaranteed by High Courts completely independent of the executive, with the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council as a final Court of Appeal.

But to what end was this vast and complicated instrument directed? Lord Lytton had expressed his doubts in the 'seventies when he wrote to Lord Salisbury about "the fundamental political mistake of able and experienced Indian officials . . . that we can hold India securely by what they call good government; that is to say, by improving the condition of the ryot, strictly administering justice, spending immense sums on irrigation works, etc." Doubts increased as the century waned. Was the administrative machine to be a dull machine, working on the discarded principle that whatever is best administered is best; or a creative force for the development of India's latent resources? What was to be given back to India by an alien agency, whatever its immense merits, which certainly was not cheap, and if anything far too elaborate? An ingenious and learned Madras civilian spent some of his leisure in drawing a comparison between the achievements of the Romans in their greatest hour and those of Britain in India, and his conclusions were instructive: they were that the Romans took more from the people, but gave more back. It would be unjust, very unjust, to say the Civil Service sniffed at the rising commercial community, though they applied to its members the mildly contemptuous term of *boxwallahs*.<sup>1</sup> After all it was recruited on an essentially literary test.

Macaulay laid down as the governing principle that applicants should be endowed with the best, the most liberal and

<sup>1</sup> *Boxwallahs* are itinerant Indian pedlars, but the term is sometimes used of European business men.

the most finished education Britain could afford. In practice this meant proficiency in most of the subjects of the Honours Schools of the universities of Great Britain and Ireland. An excellent test for administrative work, but for constructive enterprise—that is quite another story. Was there not some survival of the resentment against the interlopers—the private traders of John Company's days? Was there not a fear, a really terrible fear that the bold commercial entrepreneur might make a profit out of a Government concession?

In a country where the Government dominated currency, finance, the land, the railways, forests and public works, and where the same body of men directed policy as well as administration, those in control touched the citizen at every point. An indifference to industrial and commercial development flicked the community on the raw.

Sir Edward Law—a Finance Member of real ability and one of the few colleagues from whom Curzon would tolerate a minute of dissent—seeking to justify the policy of freezing a substantial part of the revenue in Reserve Treasuries instead of allowing it to fructify in the Presidency Banks, and this at the time when the demand for money to finance the crops coming to market was greatest, roundly declared that it was not part of the duty of government to direct its financial practice for the benefit of trade. Often in friendly discussion with Sir William Meyer we wrestled with this problem. "You are so terribly afraid of a concessionaire making money," I argued, "that you take refuge in doing little or nothing. Why not go boldly ahead? You should dance on the housetops if some concessionaire does well with your help; next time you have something to offer there will be a dozen claimants and you can make a stiffer bargain. Go resolutely ahead; give every facility to industry; but if government aid has to be sought insist that, after a liberal commercial return, profits shall be divided between the Government, the consumer and the shareholder. For after all—and this is putting it on sordid grounds—you are helping in the creation of taxable revenue." Meyer would lean his head aside and grin, adding: "You and your Bombay friends, you think in saxpences," which invited the retort: "You and your yes men, who do not think at all."



The issue was put in candid and exaggerated terms by one prominent industrialist when he said: "The bane of India is the integrity of the Indian Civil Service. Let them take twelve annas in the rupee" (Indian percentages are always expressed in terms of annas in the rupee, sixteen annas representing a hundred per cent). "and leave me four and I shall be well content. But the Civil Servant will not take even an anna, and I too get nothing."

Nor was any help given from home. There was stubborn opposition in Parliament to the establishment of a very modest import tariff for revenue purposes, and this had to be won by the abhorred excise duty on Indian-made piece goods. If ever there was an excise which justified Johnson's definition of excise as "a hateful tax levied upon commodities" it was this; it poisoned the commercial relations between Britain and India for nearly two generations.

When during the Morley régime at the India Office the Government of Madras made tentative proposals for the encouragement of village industries, that arid Cobdenite bade them refrain; he complained afterwards that he had been too literally interpreted, but the ban was effective. This indifference, without using a harsher term, of a Civil Service administration to the economic development of a country where the pressure on the soil was of increasing severity, alienated from the Government the full support of what should have been the great buttress of law and order—the impatient and harassed commercial community.

No one can be insensible of the immense benefits of an able and incorrupt Civil Service, with its powerful traditions and *esprit de corps*. Yet there were defects which too long awaited amendment. Once the recruit passed into the arcana he was there for life, unless he was corrupt or immoral. For twenty-five years he was entrenched and irremovable; there were no means of shedding the insignificant proportion of failures.

When at the turn of the century the unrest in India was at its height, and Bal Gangadhar Tilak was waging the agitation for the revival of Brahminical supremacy in the Deccan, with its fruits in assassination. I had this under discussion with an able member of the Bombay Governor's Executive Council.

"If there is trouble in this Presidency," I warned him, "I can tell you in advance where it will occur." "Anyone can say that," he rejoined. "You will say Poona, Nasik, Wai or Satara, these being the main centres of Brahminical intrigue. In each of those districts we have posted our best men." "No, I shall not take any of those places. I shall look down the History of Services, and see where your number-one prize ass is serving. The man you have reason to believe incompetent; that is where the trouble will arise." He sniffed and added: "I suppose you mean ----. He is posted to a district where there has never been any trouble." Perhaps it was unkind to remind him that he did not know his own province; it was not so many years since the Head of that District was chased by an angry mob down the main street and had to take refuge in a Hindu temple.

Anyone with an inner knowledge of India can point to instances where trouble, perhaps inevitable trouble, was made uncontrollable because it occurred where the Head of the District was known to be weak. The solution was not easy. It was inconceivable that after ten or fifteen years' service the Civil Servant should be thrown on the street unfitted for any other occupation, probably just when his family responsibilities were greatest, without some provision for his maintenance; the regulations provided only for a pension after twenty-five years; yet the retention of the weak, certainly not more than one in a thousand, was a source of embarrassment to the Government and of discredit to the Service. Rarely, if ever, was there any feeling of resentment against the British officer who knew his job and did it; there was a revolt against the alien who was neither competent nor energetic. When the remedy was applied it was worse than the disease. Proportionate pensions, drawn after a few years' service, before the officer was of real worth to India, saddled the country with the cost of allowances which had not been earned, nor is it any satisfaction to know that under a later settlement this burden was passed to the British Treasury.

The Services! The Civil Service was only a part, and in numbers a small element in the administration of India. There was the Forest Service, the Public Works Service, the

Education Service, the Indian Medical Service and so forth, all with two things in common. First the tradition, order, discipline and continuity of a cadre on which the Government of the day could confidently rely. The training-college at Cooper's Hill until its abolition in 1906 left its hall-mark on all who passed through it. Next, and this to the educated Indian was a real grievance, in practice the doors of all were open only to those who passed through them either by examination or nomination in London. Wherever he turned then the educated Indian found that there was no entrance into the higher branches of the administration of his own country unless his family could meet the cost, and he dared face the risk of a training and examination in Britain. There were other reactions.

The greatest merits of Civil Service rule in the days with which we are dealing were that it brought the administrator into direct contact with the people of the soil, and that in a country where seventy-five per cent of the population derived their livelihood from agriculture. Perhaps Bengal, with the misbegotten permanent settlement divorcing the administrator from the cultivator, was an exception. With the cessation of the rains, say in October-November, the District Officer folded his tents and stole silently away. With his tent and his gun, his pony and a tiny staff, he launched into the countryside, checked the village officer, heard the grievances of the ryots, administered simple justice as the District Magistrate, and became literally the *ma' bap*—the father and mother of the common folk. This occupied the greater part of the year, and when the rains came the District Officer returned to headquarters or some other centre to catch up with his paper-work. All he asked from the villagers was bullock-cart transport for his equipage as he moved from place to place, and fresh supplies, all paid for at current rates.

Now this was all very well as long as touring was limited to a few officers; as they multiplied the provision of transport became irksome and the demand for it raised loud and louder protest; some officers met clamour by providing their own mobile transport, but the inevitable tendency was to whittle down the touring which was the keystone of the district

administration and substitute excursions from headquarters—a very different thing. These services were paid for by the officer himself; but how much filtered down to the villagers in a land where “interception” was a fine art and *dasturi* deeply ingrained in the community is another matter.

On the eve of shifting camp a District Officer was settling his dues with the *lambardar*<sup>1</sup> and there was a fowl or two in the account. “Huzoor,” said the *lambardar*, “we could not think of charging The Presence with a few fowls.” There were groans from behind the tents and a muttered protest: “Those were not his fowls he was giving away but ours.”

There should be a special form of punishment, with plenty of boiling oil in it, for those who applied the term “Exile” and “The White Man’s Burden” to service in India. Exile! Life in India offered to the British cadet, whether in the Services or in the commercial houses, the finest prospect which could be held out to any young fellow possessed with what Mulvaney called *bowwils*. It gave him three most precious things—Opportunity, Responsibility, Authority. Is there one who has served in India who does not look back on those days as the golden age? The crisp mornings with a bite in the air. The horse and the gun, the hunt and the shoot, the glorious evenings when the sun went down in its splendour with the speed of the drawn curtain and then the hour on the lawn of the club and the long drink in the land where a man could raise a thirst. Although the cities were growing with tremendous rapidity, even at the turn of the century there was good shooting in the mainland less than thirty miles from Bombay city, and a bunder boat to take the shikari across the harbour for a long week-end amid the snipe and duck grounds of Kolaba. After the century had passed a keen-eyed sportsman on his morning ride spotted a wisp of snipe alighting on the Bombay racecourse and snaffled seven couple before breakfast.

A little of the gilt was wiped off the gingerbread as the years sped and the children grew up; the hot weather was a little harder to bear; but when the bogey of the hot weather is raised, is there no long winter in Britain, are there no dank and foggy days? This was a life no one with an income of less

<sup>1</sup> The local official responsible for government revenue.

than £5,000 a year could dream of enjoying at home. It was smoothed by domestic service reaching the highest pitch of efficiency. If there are better all-round cooks than the Goans of Bombay I have never found them; given a few stones, a dry stick or two and a chatty he would produce in the heart of the jungle a dinner to titillate the most jaded appetite. Dwellers on the other side of India boasted that the Mugg from Chittagong and that neighbourhood was an even better cook than the Goan, but more expensive. In the well-ordered household the relations between master and man were patriarchal; the staff came for life, or until the Indian days of the sahib were over, and then there was a sorrowful parting with possibly a small pension. Then at the end of his twenty-five years' service there was for the Civil Servant this substantial £1,000 a year pension, with provision for wife and family if life was cut short; for the other Services an adequate retiring allowance.

Men in commerce and industry had to take their chance, and of course some fell by the way, but in most of the responsible concerns there were generous provident funds, which furnished retiring allowances in the best possible form. And when for the Civil Servant the bones began to creak there was the prospect of transfer to the Secretariat, and long spells at the hill stations; for those in commerce, more frequent home leave. Indeed, many a Civil Servant who entered the Secretariat preserve early might never know what a hot day in India was like, save when he passed through Bombay at the worst season of the year homeward or outward bound. Furthermore, no one who served India, who looked on the welfare of India as his primary responsibility and identified himself with the land and the people, can forget the rich and generous friendships which enriched his days.

The debt of India to Britain was always trumpeted abroad. It is a great one which, when political differences are forgotten, is acknowledged by every Indian. What is not so generally recognized is the debt of Britain to India—the international status raised by this immense position; the development of character which accrued from responsibility and opportunity; the commerce warmed and flourished by

the special relations between the two countries. This is the other side of the medal which should never escape our gaze. Good was it in those days to be alive, but to be young was very heaven! Yet surveying and appreciating this extraordinary scene doubts insisted on creeping in.

The control of every phase of the administration by a Civil Service recruited on a literary test, whose members assumed their heavy responsibilities in India without any experience of the working of local government institutions or of politics, added to the difficulties of the Government of India in meeting the rising tide of Indian nationalism. When Lord Ripon's Government developed the local-government machine those bodies were treated with too much contempt. They were heavily officialized by Civil Service chairmen; their funds were small; the members were inexperienced, and local government was dismissed as just *lokil-sluff*. Now a grounding in local government would have shown the Civil Servants that, with all their exasperations, all their shortcomings, these bodies are the seedbed of responsible government, the training-ground in administration which is the only sure basis for government on the British model; this was the only means of bringing into the legislatures men with a solid background of experience. The local bodies were in effect the pale shadows of the District Officers meeting to register their conclusions, and it was not until the passing of the Act of 1919 that unofficial chairmen were made the rule. It was left to the municipalities in the great cities, and in particular that of Bombay, to furnish a real training-ground.

The constitution of the Bombay Municipality, which owed much to the political *flair* of that very shrewd man, Pherozeshah Mehta, was long a model of its kind. The Corporation itself was recruited on a wide basis, with a nominated element and representatives of the Justices of the Peace—who were primarily an electoral body—as well as the members directly elected by the ratepayers, was supreme in all questions of policy. But the executive, save for a few high posts, was the concern of the Municipal Commissioner, generally drawn from the ranks of the Civil Service, who was solely responsible to the Corporation for the working of the

machine. The system was described by one of the ablest of these Commissioners as one where the Corporation decided what should be done and the Commissioner saw that it was done. This linked the best in the German system, a responsible head of the executive in the Burgomaster, and the British system of a dominant elected body. Some of the finest men in Indian public life passed through this mill and brought a ripe experience to bear on all-Indian problems.

Any survey of the modern history of India, however cursory, will show how the lack of this political experience in the executive, the want of what can only be expressed in the French phrase, *la sens de la politique*, exacerbated a problem immensely complicated in itself.

The most depressing instance was the passing of what was called the Rowlatt Act. The ordinary law had broken down in the face of organized assassination. A Commission under a British Judge, Sir Sidney Rowlatt, after detailed inquiry reported in favour of the supercession of the judicial machinery by Special Courts where anarchy was rife. The Commission reported in 1916 and for good reason the publication of its conclusions was delayed until the First World War was won. It aroused a storm of indignation, which was intensified when the Government of India immediately introduced legislation to implement it.

These were critical days in the land. The Act of 1919 was on the anvil. Although that Act, which conferred a large measure of self-government on India, remitting to responsible Indian Ministers the nation-building forces of education, sanitation and so forth under the system known as dyarchy, went far, it did not go nearly as far as Indian men of affairs would have liked; they were prepared to accept it as an interim measure, indeed an essential step towards full responsible government as experience was gained. India, too, was fully cognizant of the immense contribution it had made to the Allied victory, in men, munitions and money. What was to be her reward? The supercession of the ordinary law? Was it to be a new and retrograde instrument for the suppression of crime—one which could be easily labelled repressive legislation? Indians of good intent implored the

Government to hold its hand. "How can we go to our constituents," they argued, "and ask for their suffrages if we bring them, after the sacrifices of the war, not a step towards freedom but another iron weapon of repression? Anarchical crime must be rigorously countered wherever it raises its ugly head. That is the need of all. Special powers may be needed to bring the criminals to book, but at this time of all others do not affront Indian opinion by a law of general application; take these powers, if and when needed, by Ordinance." Even Mrs. Besant, who had reacted from her Home Rule days to a general support of the Government, declared that a Rowlatt Act would justify revolution. The Government of India was not to be moved.

At that time I was winding up the Central Publicity Board which had carried out the task of explaining to the Indian people the basic issues in the war. I had travelled far and wide, and in contact with my Indian friends had learnt how deep-seated was the hostility to the Act and how real the fears it inspired. Returning to Delhi, I warned the Member of Council in charge that he was under a delusion; this was no factious opposition, but a genuine movement, strong in the classes which had most at stake, normally the best supporters of law and order; and urged him to take the advice of those who said that where the special powers were necessary they should be taken by Ordinance. "I won't listen to you," he blurted out. "I won't listen to any suggestion of any Ordinance." "Well and good," was the response. "You are responsible, I am not: but be sure whither you are going. You are sowing dragon's teeth and be prepared for the crop."

The shadow of Parliament was over the Viceroy. Lord Chelmsford had many admirable qualities—a good brain, abundant commonsense and a high sense of duty; but imagination was not one of them. His soul was wrapped up with the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms; he felt—with what force cannot be determined—that unless special powers were taken to grapple with anarchical crime the Reform Bill would not go through Parliament. The Rowlatt Act was forced through the Indian legislature by the deadweight of the Government majority. How far it was responsible for the direful



disturbances in the Punjab and Bombay, and how far the agitation against it encouraged Amanullah of Afghanistan to the invasion of India, must remain matters of opinion; but few can doubt that the fierceness of the agitation the Act aroused was a potent factor in the risings in Amritsar and Ahmedabad. What is not a matter of opinion, but a depressing fact, is that after all the heat and turmoil of those anxious months the provisions of the Act were never put in operation in a single part of India for even one hour.

Instances could be multiplied; two more drive the point home. In the indigo-growing areas of Bihar there was a system known as *tin katia*, whereunder the cultivating tenant had to put one-third of his land under indigo to feed the factories, and, as the factory was the only buyer, the manager could fix the price. Every impartial authority condemned the practice; the local government was desperately slow to move. But when Mr. Gandhi went to Champaran and raised the standard of revolt, the *tin katia* disappeared almost in a night, and the ryots looked to Mr. Gandhi as their liberator, not to the *ma bap* Government. During the great famine of 1899-1900 the Government of Bombay advanced large sums to the distressed ryots in the form of what is called *tagavi*, and ordinarily these advances would have been recovered with the land revenue.

The Government of the day conceived a generous plan; the dues would be cancelled if the ryot would accept a new tenure, limiting his statutory right to alienate his holding, by which means it was hoped to grapple with the immense volume of agricultural debt. This was a measure framed in a spirit of progressive altruism, but it was open to a serious objection: it changed the basis of the Bombay land-revenue system by a side wind. The unofficial members of the Legislative Council opposed the measure tooth and nail, on this main ground; the steam-roller of the official majority crushed all protests; the unofficial members withdrew from the Council Chamber in indignation. After a very brief trial the Act passed into oblivion. In these ways the unrest in India deepened; the sense of exasperation at political impotence was inflamed; and the road to responsible government, rough in any circumstances, was unnecessarily strewn with thorns. The concentra-

tion of the dual function of policy and administration in a single corpus, and that a bureaucracy, produced its inevitable result—a Government largely divorced from a growing public opinion, unable to distinguish what, from the administrative angle, may be desirable from what may be inadvisable in the political sense.

The decline and fall of this amazing organization illustrate the mutability of human institutions. The bureaucracy was at its highest and best at the turn of the century. Curzon rattled the dry bones as they had never been shaken before and emptied the vials of his wrath on the leisurely procedure of Secretariats in the note on the file relating to the partition of Bengal which is historic. But he left the structure unimpaired, indeed strengthened, and had to invoke the aid of the Civil Service to staff the new Department of Commerce which he had hoped to man with personnel drawn from industry. It was Morley, as Secretary of State for India, who struck the first harsh blow. Morley had no experience of administration and cordially disliked the bureaucrat, for whom he borrowed the Russian term *tchinovnik*. Under what are called the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909 the non-official penetrated the holy of holies, the Executive Council.

One of the most distinguished Indians of the day, Satyendra Sinha, was appointed to the Executive Council of the Viceroy and Governor-General and later moved on to the Governorship of Bihar. Indians of repute took their place on the Executive Councils of the Presidencies of Bombay and Madras; a Hindu and a Mahomedan joined the Council at the India Office. This innovation went much deeper than was at first discerned. It broke—and effectively broke—the Civil Service monopoly of power; for the first time for half a century the Services had to answer to an authority other than their own; it brought the Indian point of view to bear not only vaguely on policy but on administration. Thereafter the change was rapid, and the authority of the Service inevitably declined with each development of self-governing institutions—the Act of 1919 which established dyarchy and the great measure of 1935 which aimed directly at the goal of Dominion status in a federated India. The final scene was almost

unnoticed. The close of the Second World War found the Services worn out by overwork and absence of leave and staffed by elderly men, since recruitment was arrested with the outbreak of hostilities. It was impossible to re-create the Service on the old model; in the changing conditions of Indian life none dared to offer long covenants that could not meet the need. Any suggestion of short-term contracts was ludicrous. With the establishment of independence a handful of Britons remained to assist the Indian Republic in its tremendous task, but not for long. The great Indian Services were not killed; they faded away because their work was done. There were sore hearts then, there are sore hearts still, at the rapid, the too rapid, dismantlement of the steel frame which had so long held India together in one firm structure from Karachi to Mandalay and from Rameshwaram to the Khyber. These are vain regrets.

Their monuments? History. For nigh on a century the Indian Civil Service, backed by a small army, held India not only united but in peace within and without; they kept the balance so even between Hindu and Moslem that they were accused of partiality by both. The moment the frame was dissolved the latent passions, religious, political and economic, burst all restraining bonds. There are no more tragic pages in the annals of man than those which record in letters of blood the scenes in Bihar, Bengal and the Punjab when men and women who had lived for centuries in amity, divided only by the impassable gulf of caste and religion, fell on each other in a riot of murder, rape and arson. There is no more dolorous story than the fearful migration of ten millions quitting their homes, deserting their possessions and cherished holdings to seek refuge elsewhere, fleeing from what? From uncontrollable, unreasoning fear, leaving in their trail problems of adjustment which baffle the wit of man. Well may the survivors of this distinguished band, whether in new activities in the British bureaucracy, or in their retirement, looking back on the years of their service, claim as their justification—*circumspice!*

## SHIPS THAT PASS IN THE NIGHT

PROVINCE: A LARGE TERRITORY OR DIVISION OF A  
STATE. STATE: A WHOLE PEOPLE UNITED INTO ONE  
BODY

*English Dictionary*

IF EVER A SCENE REQUIRED THE SPEEDY AID OF THE  
SKILFUL, IT IS THE ONE ON WHICH I NOW APPEAR.  
LOSE NOT A MOMENT, APPLY THE REMEDY WITHOUT  
DELAY, SEND ABLE MEN, HONEST MEN, AND PRAC-  
TICABLE MEN TO GOVERN INDIA

*Lord Macartney (Governor of Madras, 1781-5) to Edmund  
Burke*

IT WAS IN the middle 'twenties; scene, the deck of a P. and O. liner; place, the Arabian Sea, with the lazy warmth which makes this part of the voyage home a lotus-eater's life. Amongst the passengers was a former member of the Conservative Government, one of the Young Tories. Most folk have forgotten, if they ever heard of, the Young Tories of the Baldwin Government. There were never more than four of them; by the exercise of their high character and great abilities they wielded more influence than any group in Parliament since the Fourth Party of Lord Randolph Churchill which revived the Conservative rank and file. The talk centred on Indian politics and, as inevitable, on the rising tide of Indian nationhood. "How long is the unrest going to continue?" asked my companion; "what is to be the outcome?" The reply was this: "That rests in no small measure on you and your political associates. How long is India to be treated as the midden where your political rubbish is to be shot?" Violent words perhaps. Extreme language certainly. But behind the violence lay a germ of unpleasant truth.

Nothing can excuse the levity with which successive British

Cabinets made appointments to the Indian Governorships: there is not a pin to choose between the three parties: Conservative, Liberal and Labour. The system was sound and logical. The Governorships in the three Presidencies of Bombay, Madras and Bengal—which became a Presidency when the capital was removed to Delhi in 1912—were in theory drawn from the ranks of men experienced in the public life of Britain. This was right and proper. The Presidencies were based on great industrial and commercial cities—Bombay, Madras and Calcutta. There was a large and vocal unofficial community and a vigorous political life.

The problems to be faced were not merely administrative, not predominantly agrarian, but political; there was expert knowledge in the Members of Council, recruited from the ranks of the Civil Service in the pre-Morley days, supplemented by men well versed in affairs as the Councils were expanded. Wide scope, therefore, was presented to a Governor who tempered the expert trained administrators by a knowledge of men and things in a country with a democratic constitution, by the recognition that administration was not an end in itself, but an agency to be adjusted between what was politically attainable and administrably desirable. As long as free institutions exist men will argue about the functions of policy and of administration. *The Times of India*, dealing specifically with Indian conditions, argued that it was the duty of the politician in his directing capacity to decide after consultation with his administrative advisers what ought to be done; it was the responsibility of the administrators to carry the policies into effect. Broadly speaking, the combination of policy and administration in one and the same agency can never be satisfactory. The administrator will always be obsessed by the difficulties, reluctant to disturb what exists and works reasonably well, and always treading the easier path of carrying on while political forces are growing. The politician who seeks to administer will certainly make a mess of it from lack of experience. At any rate, when these views were expounded Sir William Meyer, who was in charge of the finances, took the article to the Viceroy with his unqualified imprimatur.

Far otherwise was the position in the Provinces, as distinguished from the three Presidencies; there the problem was in the main agrarian, not industrial, commercial and political; the Lieutenant-Governorships were rightly reserved for senior members of the Civil Service, with their specialist knowledge. Bengal and Calcutta did not "find themselves" until a Governor and Council were appointed when the seat of the Central Government was removed to Delhi; as a Lieutenant-Governorship it was just an appanage of the Government of India.

The system was then good; the practice—what a falling off was there! Those whose work and responsibility lay in India were often baffled to understand what possible justification there was for many of the appointments made. When they peered below the surface it was frequently to learn that the last consideration was fitness for the job. "Lord A." was selected because his wife had held a position at Court; "Mr. B." because he was a failure in his political office and it was desirable to get rid of him without friction; "C." because he was a junior Whip or a Parliamentary Private Secretary. It may be true that no man should be judged before he has been given opportunity, yet in the case of these Indian Governorships how much sinning against the light! Two cases come to mind; one where a lifelong friend and colleague roundly asserted of a selection: "This is a really bad appointment; the man is stupid and obstinate," and so he proved. The other: "I have known this man in business and elsewhere; believe me it is a thoroughly bad selection." This practice prevailed almost to the end.

One of the evening newspapers announced a certain name; it seemed to me so grotesque, knowing the circumstances; I could not believe it possible. So I approached him in the Lobby of the House and asked him: "Have you seen the *Evening Standard*? It says that you are to be appointed Governor of . . ." expecting that he would promptly contradict it. To everyone's amazement the official announcement was made two days later, with consequences everyone should have foreseen. There was one class from which Governors should never have been drawn, the schoolmaster, for once a don

always a don. So all blinked their eyes when Sir George Clarke was taken from his desk as Secretary to the Committee of Defence and sent to Bombay. What was the reason? It can be given in his own words. "Haldane had produced his scheme of Army Reform. As Secretary to the Committee of Defence I tore it to pieces in a note, and a précis was sent to each member of the Cabinet. Haldane was told to carry on. After that, of course, there was no place for me in the Committee of Defence and they sent me here."

Clarke brought to the office great qualities; he had a good brain and powers of work; he was favourably known for a standard work on the defence of Plevna and on the Russian Fleet; but he had no acquaintance with politics and men. Nor could he shake off the lecturing habits of a professorship at Cooper's Hill.

He showed on occasion great courage. Tilak, the stormy petrel of the Deccan, had launched his second campaign to subvert the established Government with the undefined hope of restoring the Brahminical supremacy shattered with the final defeat of the Peshwas. Pressed to put down this disturber of the peace by sequestration under the Regulation of 1818, he refused on the ground that detention without a trial was so abhorrent to British ideas of justice that there would be constant pressure for release. So Tilak was tried before a Parsi judge with a jury and condemned; it led to six days of bitter rioting in Bombay, one day for every year of the sentence; but it was final; Tilak never recovered his political influence. Clarke could not slough off the habit of lecturing. He lectured the University; he lectured the business community for their stimulating speculation; he lectured the British community for their race-going relaxations until he produced a sense of general, irritated exasperation. Most of these pontifical admonitions were uttered from the narrow seclusion of Mahableshwar, the isolated hill station where the Bombay Government spent several months of the hot weather until the rains came. Then followed a season in Poona and another sojourn at Mahableshwar before Bombay was regained. During these seven months or more the Government was divorced from the public and commercial life of the

Presidency, cut off from its secretariat; there were no trunk telephones and the telegraph was often slower than the post.

In this semi-isolation and surrounded by "yes men" Clarke developed a professional impatience of the slightest contradiction, almost constituting a mania, which led him into strange ways. A belated peerage after the visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales recognized his hard work and earnest, if mistaken, purpose; but he ate out his heart in retirement because he was refused military employment during the First World War. Then he became the inspirer of a bitter organization to oppose any effective progress towards self-government in India—an opposition that was entirely ineffective, but none the less left a nasty taste in the mouth.

There was another aspect of this governorship which had unfortunate results; for the first time in India "honours" were put up to auction. A regular tariff was established; ten lakhs of rupees for a peerage, two and a half or even two and a quarter for a knighthood. At least one recipient had to borrow the money for his knighthood. True, the use he made of these funds was good; a science college which might have had to wait for years, an endowment for agricultural research, a substantial addition to the buildings of the University to assist its development into a teaching as distinct from a mere examining body, the great gateway which forms such an impressive entry into Bombay. But it was something new and very unpleasant in the public life. Of course, it was nothing in scale to be compared with the debauch in Britain after the First World War. This sounds incredible, but happens to be sober fact.

There blew into *The Times of India* office on one New Year's Eve an individual with the unusual request that he might see the honours list before publication; it arrived about midnight. When told he might peruse the telegrams as they arrived, he went on to say: "I am specially interested in this list. You see, I am the chief broker for the Coalition Government for the sale of honours. There are two names in which I am specially interested. Do any of your friends want anything? A peerage, a baronetcy, a knighthood, all can be had for cash!" Well, this was regarded as just the hot air which blows



through the purlieus of a newspaper office, but it did so happen that in this list there was an unexpected peerage and a baronetcy; possibly it was no more than a coincidence, and also the tale which went round that £100,000 was paid for the one and £25,000 for the other. What was not a coincidence was that this honest broker went up and down the land, with his offers and his tariff.

In British personnel for India the best was only just good enough; even with the tremendous pressure for employment for the middle classes there was never any sense of resentment when the Briton was of high competence, and India paid for the best. Whilst the remuneration of the Governor was £9,000 a year with an entertainment allowance, there were so many other charges spread over different departments that the total cost was not less than £50,000 to £60,000 a year. A splendid field for service lay before the Governor who was equal to his work and on top of it. Lord Sandhurst, a great gentleman, had a tough row to hoe, with the famine of 1896-7, and the outbreak of plague which baffled all efforts to control it, for everyone was ignorant until the source of infection was traced to the rat flea. When resentment against house-to-house search and removal of the sick to the hospitals (where the case mortality was ninety per cent) flamed into riots with the unusual factor of hostility directed to the European, he rose to a great occasion. The doctors pressed for more and more drastic measures. Sandhurst boldly declared that persuasion should take the place of fear. "That means recall," was heard from more than one quarter; it was just inspired commonsense. Lord Northcote was the most modest and unassuming of men who had to grapple with famine and plague, and a financial stringency so severe that the Elphinstone College was refused a permit to whitewash the walls. In his farewell to the Presidency on appointment to the Governor-Generalship of Australia he truly said in the words of Jacob: "Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been." He left a permanent mark on the rural economy of Gujarat. When the failure of the rains in 1899 hit that fertile district the peasants were aghast; they had never known drought, they clung to their villages to save the magnificent cattle which were needed

to work in the stoneless soil, and, as fodder was well-nigh unattainable, the breed was in danger of extinction. Those who have not seen a yoke of Gujarat oxen, fourteen or fifteen hands high, with great spreading horns, do not know what draught cattle can be. Lord Northcote drew on his private purse to establish a cattle farm at Charodi, where a selected herd was established, and the rich agricultural industry was saved. Lady Northcote's abounding charities and gracious influence kept the community spirit alive in years when it was sore tried.

What is charm? Can anyone define it? Yet none can come within its ambit without realizing that it is there and profiting from its radiating force. No Governor left a deeper impression on any Presidency than Lord Willingdon, supported in every activity by the consort who earned the tribute of "The Lady with the Golden Heart." It is an extreme statement, yet literally true, that the divisions and exasperations which were the legacy of the arid Sydenham period melted like hailstones in the sun and the people of Western India were welded into a common devotion to service never before reached, never afterwards attained. These were the years of war—war which India had not known for a century. Bombay was the centre of the maelstrom, for it was the port of embarkation for the hundreds of thousand of troops which strengthened the sword arm of the Empire in France, in East Africa, in Egypt and in Mesopotamia. Bombay was also the reception centre for the sick and wounded who returned from battlefields sown with pain to be healed of their wounds and to fight again.

The story of India at war belongs to another chapter; sufficient now to say that it is impossible to imagine any man more fitted by character, abilities and personality to direct, inspire and invigorate a community in such unprecedented stress. It was an era of financial prosperity, for money flowed in like water to meet the prodigious military expenditure. Lord and Lady Willingdon had only to ask to receive, and nothing human effort and forethought could do was left undone to mitigate the horrors of war. Willingdon kept the control of these great charities in his own hands and set himself like flint against wasteful diffusion of effort, with one

exception—the special field of women's activities. 'Then was seen a movement without parallel—English, Hindu, Moslem and Parsi secretaries mobilizing under Lady Willingdon's direct guidance, bringing into beneficent movement a great company of women of all races for service to humanity. The funds specifically earmarked for the Women's Branch exceeded £250,000; of course, the foundations had been laid in part by a generation of workers for the National Indian Association, but it called for the trowel of the Master Mason to raise them to this impressive height. Nor was the work allowed to perish when the emergency of war passed; this Women's Branch was perpetuated in the Women's Council, and it heralded the active participation of women in the public life of India which is such a remarkable force in the India of today.

On occasion Lord Willingdon betrayed a pretty wit. The appearance of the German raider *Emden* in Indian waters stirred them not a little. That unease grew into something not far from panic when shells were thrown into the harbour of Madras. Excited citizens rushed to Lord Willingdon anxiously to inquire into the danger of Bombay, and the answer was characteristic. "The most vulnerable place is Government House at Malabar Point, which would be easiest to reach from the guns of a hostile ship. I am not going away." That *not* raced round the bazaars; it had a tranquillizing effect far surpassing any reasoned statement—even if any such had been possible with the elusive Captain Müller and his cruiser turning up at all sorts of unexpected places, and never more destructive than when the Chief Naval Officer announced that the seas had been swept clean. Even with the pains and fears of war long past the years of Lord Willingdon's governorship are green in the memories of all who lived and worked in those golden days, memories the more vivid when for no small part of the time the lead was given under distressing personal loss; their eldest son, the hope of the House, was missing during the advance from the Marne, and fragmentary hopes based on illusory reports from various quarters only prolonged the agony of suspense.

The years of war were inevitably years of administrative

quietude, not stagnation by any means, but this was no time to embark on major policies and developments. Moreover, in 1917 came the momentous declaration defining, for the first time, that the establishment of responsible government was the goal of British policy, and the inquiry by Lord Chelmsford and Mr. Edwin Montagu, Secretary of State for India, into the means for giving it effect. So when Lord Lloyd arrived to take over the reins of office there was a great accumulation of delayed projects ripe for action—and Mr. Gandhi's revolutionary activities were in the making. What a little tiger Lloyd was! His was the spirit of the Elizabethans. Thrilled with pride at the work the builders of the Commonwealth and Empire had done, he was vividly convinced that there was yet more at hand. There was no effort he was not prepared to make, no danger he was not ready to face, no responsibility he was not ready to bear, to consolidate and spread the true mission of Empire. What do we mean by Empire? Not the lust of power; not domination by force; but surely this—that each part of the Empire should find its fullest expression under the Crown, nay more, a fuller expression than it could attain outside its ambit—or in the later words of Mr. Fraser, Prime Minister of New Zealand, independence with something more in the nature of security. There were two major tasks ready to Lloyd's hand—the long-delayed scheme for the extension of the area of Bombay city by the reclamation of eleven hundred acres from the sea round the majestic sweep of Back Bay, and the barrage on the Indus at Sukkur in Sind. The Back Bay reclamation has already been dealt with; now for Sind. My own modest dwelling was within a hundred yards of Government House, and once a week Lloyd would telephone, suggesting breakfast and a talk. These were idyllic hours. A small table would be laid on the turf under the shadow of the verandah, looking out on the Arabian Sea; a light haze tempered the heat of the sun (in what is called the cold weather the climate of Bombay is the best in the world), and peace reigned over the troubled land. It was on one of these occasions that Lloyd protested: "Have you become more than usually insane? What on earth do you mean by suggesting that Sind should be separated from the Presidency of Bom-

bay?" The idea of truncating his charge was abhorrent to him. "Sir," was the response, "this is a matter of psychology. If you cajole Sind into remaining within the orbit of Bombay it will at once become separatist. Tell them that they can dree their own weird and they will hasten to your feet because they know too well that there are only two alternatives. Either it must become a poor, neglected province of its own, and it has never paid its way and exists only by large subventions from the Presidency proper; or else it must be joined to the Punjab with which it has no affinities. But they must have their barrage on the Indus. It is life or death to the Province. Although thirty per cent of the Punjab is now irrigated, its able and adventurous engineers are asking for more and casting covetous eyes on the surplus waters of the Indus. It is now or never."

The prophecy was correct. The Presidency of Bombay defied any logical justification; it was not planned on any coherent system, but, like *Topsy*, just grew. In the far south there were the Kanarese districts, Dravidian in their origin, with a language and script of their own; all their affinities were with Mysore and Madras. Then came the great block of Maharashtra, which under any intelligent arrangement should have absorbed the Berars when Curzon negotiated the arrangement with the Nizam of Hyderabad, which for all practical purposes incorporated them in British India. Northward stretched the rich districts of Gujarat, in many respects the garden of India, and beyond again Sind, which when conquered by Napier was attached to Bombay just for convenience. The hub of the Presidency was the great city of Bombay, where all races jostled each other. Maharashtra furnished most of the labour for the eighty textile mills and the greater part of the labour force. The Gujaratis dominated the cloth market and thrust their keen commercial intelligence into every phase of the thriving finance and commerce. Sind was just Sind, a semi-independent Commissionership, with its own tongue; such was the babel that a District Judge protested that eleven languages and dialects were going in his court in a single case. Yet it worked; there was a robust provincial spirit; and communications gradually developed round the capital

city. So the Sindis came meekly to the Governor, protesting that never, no never, would they desert Bombay, but praying for the barrage lest they die.

This great work revealed Lloyd at his administrative best. During half a century a useful irrigation system had been built up in the Sind desert, but with one exception these were inundation canals—dependent for their water on the rise of the river, and when for any reason the floods were low the canals were dry and the land lay bare. The provision of a barrage was tossed to and fro between London and India, for more than a generation, and side-tracked into such arguments as whether a barrage should be built before canals or canals before a barrage. Just when the project seemed to be coming to fruition there arose one of the exasperations which made India so impatient of London control; an amiable, well-meaning, but terribly mistaken Sind engineer won the ear of the Secretary of State and filled him with doubts. Was the barrage really necessary? Could it stand and control the tremendous river if built? Lloyd grasped the nettle firmly. He deputed the ablest engineer at his command, Arnold Musto, to examine the project; Musto gathered all the scattered threads together and prepared a report so lucid and convincing that nothing remained to be said. Without Lloyd's dynamic energy it is more than doubtful if the monumental work which brought under cultivation an area as large as the whole irrigated lands of Egypt at a cost of £15,000,000 would have been completed.

Lloyd was often described as a "harbitrary" gent, finding his full expression in a committee of one. Well, even his best friends would not say that he suffered fools gladly. Look at the other side. It fell to him to put into operation the Act of 1919 which transferred the nation-building forces—education, sanitation, excise and so forth—to Indian Ministers with independent authority. He gathered round him the strongest team functioning in any presidency and province, three executive councillors and four ministers, all men of first-class repute and ability. He welded them into a team. Under the Act large powers were reserved to the Governor over and above his councillors and ministers: Lloyd never used them and always

secured agreement. The storm of passion which swept over India in 1919 was not confined to the Punjab with its direful memories of Jhallianwalla Bagh; there were serious disturbances in the growing textile city of Ahmedabad and in parts of the uneasy Deccan. They were countered with vigour and success and left no bitter memories behind; all Indians recognized that the preservation of law and order in a land where a very thin partition stands between the rule of law and murder, arson and rape, which may break out in the most unexpected places, is a major interest of all communities. But when the suppression of disorder is accompanied by acts of humiliation—then the iron enters into the soul. Lloyd blenched at nothing. Mr. Gandhi defied authority in pursuit of his obsession with a non-violence which was anything but non-violent in practice. Lloyd stretched out his strong hand and arraigned him before the courts for trial and sentence. Hard he was in exacting the best from the servants of the State; but he upheld them against any popular clamour. Could any administrator ask a finer tribute than this—he won the loyalty if not the affection of the servants of the Crown?

To this passing tribute to the men drawn from the public life of Britain who served well the Crown and India in the Presidencies justice demands an addendum. The early death of Lord Brabourne was a great loss. Quick in the uptake, alert in mind, receptive but decisive in action, and experienced both in parliament and business, he did admirable work during the three years of his governorship of Bombay before accepting a transfer to Bengal. There was sound reason for the general rule of never filling the Viceroyalty from the governorships; a Viceroy so selected was bound to view India from the standpoint of the Presidency in which he served and the Presidencies in their conditions and policies are wide as the poles asunder. Willingdon would have liked another five years in Bombay. Montagu, with his shrewder political instinct, refused and offered him Madras; so Willingdon had served in two Presidencies and as Governor-General of Canada before bringing his matured experience to the Vice-regal charge. If Brabourne had been spared for his five years



A BOUQUET FOR THE AUTHOR





AN ANXIOUS  
MOMENT:  
HIT OR MISS?  
LORD READING  
TIGER SHOOTING  
AT GWALIOR



WELL AND TRULY HIT: THE TROPHY



LAND OF THE OX CART: THE TRACTOR IS COMING



INDUSTRIAL  
INDIA  
THE TATA  
STEELWORKS



THE PASSING OF THE PRINCELY HOUSES  
THE PALACE, GWALIOR



MODERN INDIA THE TIMES OF INDIA BUILDING

in Bengal he would have been admirably qualified for the Viceroyalty.

Sir John Anderson—India, which was a little surprised when he was appointed Governor of Bengal, soon learnt that there was a man. On his record who would have confidently assumed that he was gifted with the qualities demanded for the guidance of the affairs of the most disturbed and difficult charge in India? Eminent even in the highest ranks of the British Civil Service, his work was so much behind the scenes that he was unseen by the public eye. The Home Office, with its unceasing stream of confidential reports on all the malignants who flourish beneath the surface, and even more distinguished responsibilities in Ireland in the days of trouble—these were not experiences calculated to inspire a charitable view of the human being. Sir John had not been in Calcutta for six months before all realized that its affairs were firmly held in those large, strong hands; there was something even more valuable. There was the natural right to expect from him administrative qualities of the rarest character, and Bengal got them. There was no reason to expect the functioning of a truly liberal mind; Bengal got that in addition.

Diligent search and inquiry have failed to discover any deliberate thought which induced the restriction of the term of office of Viceroys and Governors to five years.<sup>1</sup> Certainly it had no statutory sanction. An interesting speculation is what would have happened if a Viceroys or Governor had refused to yield his office at the end of the quinquennium. Of course, he

<sup>1</sup> This question was answered by Curzon in his *British Government in India*; he wrote that the five-year period was fixed, "not by law but by custom." He further noted that the twenty-seven substantive Governors-General who ruled at Calcutta down to 1912 (when the transfer to Delhi took place) had an average period of five years, though Warren Hastings held the post for about eleven years; Cornwallis and Wellesley each for seven; Lord Hastings for over nine; Dalhousie for eight; Canning and Curzon himself for six. Curzon also explained that "The five-years' prescription is largely a legacy from the first Regulating Act of 1773, which appointed the first Governor-General (Warren Hastings) for a term of five years. This was only a temporary enactment, and Hastings' appointment was continued thereafter, for a year at a time, by successive Acts of Parliament."

could be dismissed—action so drastic that it would have provoked controversy or scandal in the case of a distinguished and successful administrator with political friends at home.

In the Lieutenant-Governorships, always filled by members of the Civil Service, the fixed period was logical and desirable. These positions were not attained until towards the close of the period of service; they were exacting; and at the end of the normal period the Lieutenant-Governors were, with one notable exception, tired men ripe for retirement. Far otherwise was the position of Viceroys and Governors of the Presidencies. They came to their task in the prime of life. Save in the case of Lord Curzon, they had little or no knowledge of India and its problems. For the first year or eighteen months they were busied learning the alphabet of their job with no time to formulate broad general policies—if they had any. By the time policies were framed the day of retirement, frequently the dreaded day of retirement, was approaching, and there was the inevitable tendency to carry on rather than to plunge into administrative reforms which were bound to arouse controversy. Yet it is a strange and indisputable fact that no Viceroy, Governor or Lieutenant-Governor pressed for an extension of his tenure without suffering severely in credit.

The historic instance is that of Lord Curzon. In one of the most engaging books on India—*The India We Served*—Sir Walter Lawrence wrote of the first five years. Lawrence was a great private secretary who brought to the office wide experience of India and intimate knowledge of the lives of the common people won in settling the land-revenue system of Kashmir. Retiring early to administer the Bedford estates, he was induced, it is understood, to return on assurance that a further turn of service would qualify him for the pension he forfeited by his premature resignation. The kindest and most likeable of men, a staunch friend, he was always approachable—the emollient between an impetuous Viceroy determined to hustle the East and a bureaucratic administration very loath to be hustled. And he always kept himself in the background, there was never the suspicion that he was running the Viceroy.

Lawrence asked me as an old friend to review the book, and I was glad to do so, and afterwards we fell into discussion on its merits. "Sir Walter," I said, "with all its merits there are two important errors in that book. You say Curzon was almost a great Viceroy. No, no. For his first five years Curzon was a great Viceroy, and if he had left then would have ranked with Dalhousie as one of the great constructive personalities in India. Then you urge that political development in India should take the form of an extension of the area of the Indian States under their hereditary rulers. Again, no. The Indian States, with their autocratic rulers, are the most vulnerable administrations in India. When Mysore was returned to its ancient dynasty after seventy years of British rule it was under strict treaty limitations which distinguished it from all others; in all major respects it was a British province under an hereditary Hindu ruler. When the last extension of Indian State rule was effected, the conferment of ruling rights on the Maharajah of Benares, the city of Benares itself had to be excluded from his jurisdiction."

After pondering awhile, Lawrence said: "I am inclined to think that you are right. But if I had written that Curzon ceased to be a great Viceroy at the end of his five years, everyone would have said that the change came because I had ceased to be his private secretary and that would never have done. And as for the extension of Indian State rule over areas which for generations have formed part of British India, again perhaps you are right." It is characteristic of much sloppy thinking on Indian affairs that this notion of the extension of the authority of the Indian States should again and again have been recommended by men who ought to have known better. The Rajputana and South Indian States of Travancore and Cochin apart, the Ruling Houses were alien and exotic and stood only by virtue of their treaties with the Paramount Power. They quickly disappeared once India attained independence.

If Curzon had relinquished his office at the end of five years instead of wringing an extension from a reluctant Home Government, what a superb achievement would have been his! The most important of his projected twelve reforms had

## SHIPS THAT PASS IN THE NIGHT

either been accomplished or were well on the way. He would not have been deeply involved in the fiercely resented partition of Bengal, with the bitter surge towards nationalism and the Swadeshi movement which it aroused and developed. He would not have been embroiled in the controversy with Lord Kitchener over the shape of the military administration which precipitated his resignation and clouded his last months.

Even Lord Willingdon, whose Governorship of Bombay is regarded as the golden age of the Presidency, suffered temporarily in esteem in an extension of no more than six months, and was involved in a controversy over the nature of his farewell for which he had no responsibility. Perhaps the most tragic case was that of Sir Michael O'Dwyer. He was a great Lieutenant-Governor. The courage and energy with which he mobilized and directed the resources of the Punjab during the most anxious years of the war were beyond praise. His courage was unshakable and even the news of disaffection in his own bodyguard never caused him a tremor. The charge of illiberality often levied against him does not lie. He had a genuine love for the landowner and the peasant, and Barnes Court, the official residence at Simla, was open house to the young territorial aristocracy. Perhaps he had less love for the new middle class and for the growing lawyer community, forgetting that in the first stages of a constitutional movement the middle classes and the legal fraternity supply the driving force.

To his irreparable loss of repute he was induced to stay on after his five years had expired, and these embraced the period of the Punjab disturbances and Jhallianwalla Bagh for which his direct responsibility was little if anything more than a resolute loyalty to his colleagues. This narrowed his views in later years and to many Indians his name was the synonym for reaction in Indian policy; this was wholly undeserved, for he was a warm-hearted and generous man, and but for the prolongation of his term would have stood high in the galaxy of Indian rulers.

Why was a practice which had no sanction in law, no justification in logic which worked so well in practice, never abrogated without misfortune? That is a hard question to

answer. Sir Pherozechah Mehta used to say that every Governor must disappoint friends and make enemies. "But we said to ourselves: 'He has only another year of office; it is not worth while making a dust and we will wait for his successor.'" That may be true, but it is far from the complete explanation. Perhaps this is nearer the mark. When a Viceroy or Governor entered on his office he was surrounded by well-established colleagues—men of ripe experience with nothing further to expect, save in a few instances a nomination to the Council of the India Office. They were substantially independent, and the Head was after all no more than *primus inter pares*.

As the years passed, the independent Members of Council completed their term of office one by one; new men arrived; these owed their position and their prospects to the Viceroy or the Governor; they were his men. It would be exaggerating to say they were "yes men," but, human nature being what it is, they inevitably tended to fall in with his views. Without going as far as Lord Acton's dictum on power, the very real authority vested in holders of these high offices inevitably encouraged an autocracy impatient of restraint and resentful of criticism, and it was therefore a wise provision which cut down power before it became oppressive.



## THE FERMENT OF WAR

WAR IS POLICY IN ACTION

*Spenser Wilkinson (and many other writers)*

IF WE LISTENED TO THE SOLDIERS, OUR FRONTIERS  
WOULD END AT THE MOON

*Lord Salisbury*

NOBODY, WITH THE possible exception of Lord Morley, imagined that politically and constitutionally India could stand at gaze at the end of a war dominated in the later stages by the heady doctrine of self-determination. Lord Morley was obsessed by the perfection of his scheme of 1909; he protested that it should remain untouched for at least a generation; but, as he resigned rather than participate in a government which was driven to war, he was not the best of judges. Yet in justice to him there is this to be said: if there had been no war he would have had the countenance of that distinguished Indian patriot, G. K. Gokhale, who in a ruminative aside remarked that if the scheme were wisely administered it should hold for thirty years.

To understand the tremendous impact of the war on the political forces in India it is necessary to refresh our memories of the immense services her government and people rendered to the common cause. Defence in India was too long treated as if it was the sole concern of the soldier men—a mystery sealed off from the common folk which they were not competent to understand. So far as the curtain was lifted there was only one possible enemy, Russia. Every year there were added to the vast aggregation of plans to resist a Russian invasion a few hundred tons of appreciations of the situation; every time a Cossack appeared in, say, the Pamirs a quiver of apprehension went round the cantonments. So far as anything

was known, and it was precious little, Imperial strategy was based on the supposition that in time of war India would have to be powerfully reinforced from Britain, but it would be a year at least before the Navy could ensure the freedom of the seas. So India must be prepared to stand on her own feet for this period. Yet, though this was the basis of the defence programme, little more than spasmodic efforts were made to fulfil it until Kitchener arrived.

There were magnificent regiments. Those who never saw a crack Indian cavalry regiment on parade, or a battalion of stalwart Sikhs or Punjab Mussulmans march past, never witnessed the panoply of war before the mechanical age. And the cavalry officers in those regiments that had been raised as Irregular Horse devised for themselves uniforms which would have put the Napoleonic marshals in the shade and made Murat look a poor thing. Quetta was made a great place of arms and linked with the main transport system by the railways up the Hurnai and the Bolan which were so costly that it was a commonplace they could have been ballasted with rupees. The Khojak tunnel was pierced and railway material accumulated at New Chaman for a rapid extension to Herat. Later, the line from Quetta was pushed into Nushki in the event of a hostile movement through Seistan. But there was no complete plan; no careful organization; regiments were scattered over the land, often in isolated places which had lost any military significance they might once have had; battalions were kept on the Army List which were destitute of combatant value.

Kitchener did not exaggerate when he wrote to Lady Salisbury that the Army in India was distributed higgledy-piggledy; he gathered up the threads in his strong hands and substituted for this empiricism an Army organized in nine divisions, each self-contained and ready to move as a coherent force, leaving adequate protection for internal security. This was tested in the short Zakka Khel campaign, and found good. It was the most brilliant episode in the tangled skein of the Frontier. Yet how the old Adam survived! Though each division was supposed to be entirely self-contained, with a personnel welded into a team, on the first occasion when one

of the new divisions moved a Chief of the Staff was foisted on it from Army Headquarters.

It is hard nowadays to recall the carking anxiety with which those of us who were in India watched the mutations of the Home Government in 1914. It was known that the Cabinet was divided—divisions which fructified in the resignations of Morley and Burns. There was no great confidence in other colleagues of Asquith. We were not to know that George Lloyd, stirring up the leaders of the Opposition over the week-end, induced the pledge of Conservative support which stiffened the Cabinet. There were few who appreciated the magnitude of the struggle to which the Empire was committed. Yet the Indian public was not without some warning. When Franz Ferdinand was assassinated there was a chorus of assurance from the Home Press that this need not disturb the peace of Europe. Two dissident notes were struck. The leading Socialist newspaper in Germany, *Vorwaerts*, declared that this meant war; *The Times of India* in Bombay wrote that war was inevitable. More, *The Times of India* urged the community to be prepared for at least three years of war. We had seen too much of the German Army, and, above all, of the German Navy, to be under any illusions as to the strength of the enemy we had to meet.

Once again in the history of the Empire the hour found the man. The declaration of war was not an hour old before Lord Hardinge, the Viceroy, pledged India's last man and last gun to the common cause; there was no reliance on Britain for reinforcements; there was unstinted service to every battle front. Then was seen the fine fruit of Kitchener's work. Two complete divisions of infantry, those from Lahore and Meerut, and a cavalry division, at once supported the thin khaki line in France, so denuded by the hard fighting at Le Cateau and the retreat from Mons. These formed the only trained reserve available and arrived in France just in time to close a gap in the British line which could not otherwise have been filled. They were the forerunners of a ceaseless stream of armed men which flowed to every theatre of war—to Mesopotamia, East Africa, Egypt and even Tsing-Tao.

Within six months of the outbreak of the war eighty thousand

British officers and troops and two hundred and ten thousand Indian officers and men were sent overseas. For several weeks before the arrival of the untrained and ill-equipped Territorial battalions from Britain the total British garrison in India, with its ever-present menace of the North-west Frontier, was less than fifteen thousand. The Indian Princes placed all their resources at the disposal of the King; the Indian community donated great sums to the Red Cross; the Indian factories produced tents, boots, saddlery and clothing; the arsenals and the stores rifles, cannon and small-arm ammunition. Hardinge had every right to claim that he trusted the people of India in the great emergency and told them so. His confidence was not misplaced. If India did not become, in a later phase, the arsenal of democracy, it was the reservoir for the manpower which made final victory possible. These services are half-forgotten now—their influence on the political development of India was scarce mentioned in the later discussions on constitutional reform—but they were powerful forces leading to the fulfilment of British rule.

And yet if the man-in-the-street, if such exists, or the politician in the House of Commons were asked what India did in the First World War, if he did not profess blank ignorance he would probably ask: "How about Mesopotamia?" Is there anything more exasperating in the realm of discussion than this nasty trick of using a word and thinking it is an argument—of murmuring that blessed word Mesopotamia and besmirching the magnificent record of India, of bleating out that other word, Munich, as if it damned the statesman whose courageous adventure saved Europe from annihilation? In justice to men who have been cruelly wronged, and to soliders whose courage was unsurpassed, is it not desirable to get Mesopotamia in correct perspective once and for all?

The decision made early in the war to send a force to the Persian Gulf to seize the forts at the mouth of the Shatt-el-Arab and occupy Basra, to protect the head-waters of the Gulf and cover the oilfields of Maidan-i-Naphtun and the outlet at Abadan, was sound. Basra was taken without much difficulty; the Basra vilayet was occupied in sufficient strength. Then the

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itch for sideshows which has infected British strategy throughout the centuries became malignant. The front was pushed on to Amara, then to Kut-el-Amara, and preparations were made for an advance to Baghdad.

If anyone has the patience to read the second volume of the official history of the Mesopotamian campaign he will find how this mad project was tossed to and fro between the Mesopotamian Command and A.H.Q. in India, between the Viceroy and the Cabinet; he will find the truth, nothing but the truth, but not the whole truth. General Nixon in command knew that, with his health failing, his career was coming to an end and he was naturally anxious to round it off with a resounding success.

Sir Percy Cox, the able and experienced Political Officer, sought to close the road to Teheran seeing that the Germans were using every lever to bring Persia into the war. Grave warnings came from Townshend, the sword arm of the Mesopotamian Forces, who had won continuous successes against the inferior Turkish troops. He was convinced that the advance was strategically unsound and that the force available was inadequate. Beauchamp Duff, whatever were his later errors, saw the position clearly. There is vivid in my memory a frank talk with him at Simla in the later months of 1915; I had been specially invited to visit the hill station for the purpose of this discussion. "The strategical key to Mesopotamia," he said, "is Amara. Every mile we move beyond Amara our transport position—shall we use the portmanteau word logistical?—grows worse *vis-à-vis* the Turks. Every mile the Turks move below Amara their strength weakens. I was reluctant to sanction the move to Kut, but that has been done; I am pressed to agree to an attack on Baghdad, but will not do so without the guarantee of at least two divisions of reinforcement."

The advance was sanctioned; the battle was heroically fought; a tactical success was gained, but could not be made good in face of the arriving Turkish divisions; Townshend broke off the action and withdrew to Kut with marked address, and we were committed to the disastrous enterprise of relieving that post. Where lay the blame?

Hardinge places it squarely on the shoulders of Nixon, whose responsibility was great, but then he was *fou*, as any examination of his despatches reveals. The real responsibility was elsewhere. Hardinge left India on 4 April; passing through Bombay, he stayed with Willingdon at Government House and asked me to see him the morning before he sailed. After touching on the main features of his administration, he spread a great map depicting the plans for the relief of the beleaguered garrison and wound up his explanation by saying: "I am not entirely happy about Kut." "You do not mean to tell me, sir," I asked, "that you think Kut is going to be relieved?" "I am assured," was his answer, "by the Commander-in-Chief that there is not the slightest doubt of the success of the operations."

It was perhaps arrogant, but we in Bombay knew more of the conditions in Mesopotamia than Army Headquarters, and I could not forbear saying: "I cannot believe Kut will be relieved. It is a question whether surrender comes before we have suffered twenty thousand casualties, or after we have sustained that loss." Hardinge pondered for a moment and closed the discussion: "The pressure brought to bear on me from London to sanction the advance as a counterblast to the pending evacuation of Gallipoli was so intense that I dared not refuse my consent." By the time the attempt to relieve Kut was abandoned the casualties were twenty-three thousand.

For our self-respect a veil must be drawn over the dreadful weeks that followed, with this note, based on the Official History. The two divisions for which Duff asked were despatched, but in what fettle did they arrive? The units of the 3rd and 7th Divisions came piecemeal and in no regular order. Aylmer, charged with the attack, had no proper Corps Staff; India had no staff officers to spare; and a Staff had to be hurriedly improvised from any officers available. For the failure, and for all the terrible sufferings to the garrison and the relieving force which accrued, the British Cabinet, and the British Cabinet in the main, must be held guilty. There are no meaner pages in the history of the British Army than those which disclose the attempt of the politicians to conceal their own *laches* by besmirching the immense services of India

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and her Army. Was the lesson learnt? If anyone thinks it was, let him read and read again the no less tragic story of the side-show in Greece which brought the British in North Africa to the verge of disaster.

Before the campaign was over we had a ration strength in Mesopotamia of four hundred thousand. If anyone can discover any proportionate strategical advantage he must be a genius.

In time of total war every responsible editor is confronted with a grave decision. Some part of the war effort must go wrong; some things which ought to be done are not done; what is to be his line of action? Is he to ignore these happenings, taking an easy refuge behind the censorship; or is he, with his courage in both hands, to draw public attention to them? There must have been anxious consultations in the office of *The Times* before that great journal revealed the grievous shell shortage which was hamstringing our forces on the Western Front. Such an emergency arose in July-August, 1916.

Bombay was the great military distributing centre in India. It was the main port of embarkation for the immense forces which were sent overseas; it was also the place of arrival for those returning from the various fronts. After the failure of the major attack on the Turkish positions in Mesopotamia, due to the blunder on the Dujaila redoubt, when the weary British troops were battering themselves to pieces in futile attacks on the strong trenches at Es Sinn, there was a dreadful stream of broken men pouring into the city. The sick and sorry who ought to have been treated as convalescents were returned in ordinary troopships; thousands who ought to have been regarded as hospital cases were moved in ill-found transports. If Sir Wyndham Knight, the General Officer Commanding in Bombay, had not taken a grave decision, and provided hospital accommodation far in excess of that sanctioned by Army Headquarters, there would have been a far worse breakdown. What was to be done about it?

It so happened that the Finance Member, Sir William Meyer, was visiting Bombay to grapple with a currency development which threatened a convertibility of the rupee

which would have shaken the confidence not only of the commercial community but of every ryot in the land. As it was the monsoon season, and Government House was closed, he was staying in my house. After compliments, I put the position to him and asked if nothing could be done to stem the tide of human misery which was flowing into the city. His answer was arresting. "You stagger me," he said. "At our last Council meeting, shortly before I left Simla, the Commander-in-Chief assured us that everything in Mesopotamia was now in good trim." Well, if the Commander-in-Chief was so isolated in the hilltops that he did not know what were the conditions at the front, or if he was misleading the Government, what was the duty of a responsible newspaper? We did not hesitate long. We published a strong and minatory leading article exposing the grievous sufferings of the troops, and then did a thing which was wrong, and might have brought serious trouble in its train; we argued that there would be no real improvement until there was a change in the High Command in India, and a change in the command at the other little Simla which had been set up at Basra.

Then the wigs were on the green, as it was confidently expected they would be. First a line of encouragement, as always, from Willingdon, who was fully seized of the situation. "Your article on Mesopotamia hit *everything* on the head and was excellent in every way." But that was only the preliminary; the thunder followed in this formidable document:

My dear Stanley Reed,

I have received a wire this morning from the Viceroy the contents of which he has requested me to communicate to you --it has reference, as you will probably expect, to your leader on Mesopotamia.

He commences by saying that the article in question is decidedly embarrassing, from the fact that so long as a General exercises command in the field and Lake's continued presence there does not now rest with the G. of I. but with the General Staff at home, personal attacks on him are calculated to undermine confidence and discipline among his troops.

He further adds that such an attack emanating from a paper like *The Times of India* renders the position of Government



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*vis-à-vis* the vernacular Press extremely difficult, as it would not be tolerated from them.

He writes also to point out that he allowed your strictures to go home uncensored at his end because the latter consideration does not *arise* in the case of publication at home.

I have given you the wire practically word for word and have wired the V. that the document has been duly presented to you.

I come down on the 15th when we can talk matters over after the Convocation. I need hardly say that I am not entirely in accord with the contents of the wire!!

My instinct is that I now should write a personal letter to the V. pointing out all the various facts that you and I hear about every day with regard to Mesopotamia and urging him to really stiffen up—but I shan't do this till I've seen you.

Beauchamp Duff, of course, was right in protesting to the Viceroy in the terms of this telegram. The Viceroy was, of course, right in warning the paper. But protests and warnings did not improve an intolerable situation. So far as the paper was concerned there could be no falling back; the risk was taken with open eyes. So I wrote to Willingdon a letter which he could forward to Chelmsford or not as he thought best, asserting that the grave step was taken with a full sense of responsibility, but, as the Viceroy had the matter in hand himself, no further exposure would be made. And a private letter to Willingdon, in much the same terms, but adding that in similar circumstances the paper would do exactly the same again and disregard the consequences. Willingdon was staunch, as always in a crisis. He sent both letters to the Viceroy and did not mince matters in his communications with me, as the following robust expression of opinion shows:

I have sent your letter on and think it excellent. I have also sent a covering letter from myself to say that I felt I ought in all honesty to let the V. know that there was hardly a word in that article with which I disagreed!

I really think that things are moving, but what a lot of hard pushing is necessary.

You and I, if we get a real change, will really be able to feel we have done something; let us push on together and if necessary get the sack together.

Chelmsford, in warning me of my misdeeds, mentioned that he had allowed the purport of the offending article to be cabled to London uncensored. That was for a very good reason. A few days before it was published he had himself sent a secret message to the Cabinet in much the same terms. Well, he could hardly clap me in gaol for demanding a course of action which had his entire approval.

Ten years afterwards I was presiding over a Summer School on Indian affairs held by the Girls' Diocesan Association in the Theological College at Lichfield. The first speaker was Chelmsford. Perhaps it was a little malicious, but the opportunity was too tempting to be lost. In presenting him to this most intelligent audience I remarked that it was a novel position for me to be in—presiding over a gathering where the ex-Viceroy was to speak when for five years I trembled at his lightest frown, and when he quitted India he had grave misgivings whether he ought not to have left me, in the words of the Indian patriots, rotting in gaol. Chelmsford slyly retorted that he did not recognize our respective relations in these terms, and, walking in the gardens of the Bishop afterwards, he suggested that I might like to hear his side of the episode. "No, sir. I know your side. I wanted to put my own side when you could not answer back."

The responsibility for any administrative defects which developed as the operations expanded far beyond anything contemplated, or for which the Indian Army was organized, lay with the Home Government. The pace of reform was slowed down during Kitchener's last two years—another illustration of the general wisdom of the five years' appointment—and there were two outstanding soldiers ripe for the succession. Sir Edmund Barrow, a sound administrator with honourable experience on the Frontier; Sir Beauchamp Duff, whose work lay in the realm of administration. No one who came in contact with Duff in the heyday of his powers could fail to appreciate that he was in the presence of a distinguished man. So the India Office fell back on seniority and selected—Sir O'Moore Creagh.

During the five wasted years of his command the Indian Army stagnated. The numerical strength of the Forces was

not reduced, but the spirit of progress disappeared. The exceptional men Kitchener had called to commands, high and low, passed to other appointments; the deadweight of seniority as the avenue of promotion was clamped down on the Army. Nor was that all by any means. The science of war is not static; great changes were materially affecting the organization and equipment of armies, and these were very costly. The Government of India, with all its financial reforms, was not prepared to lavish further large sums when there was no assurance that they would be wisely and prudently spent.

This was the inheritance to which Duff succeeded. If the command had come to him in the fulness of his powers when Kitchener retired he might, and probably would, have driven forward to completion the reorganization which had yielded such useful results. But when the command came to him he was five years older—five years of detachment from the serving soldier, five more years at the desk. As soon as he was seated at Army Headquarters the war was upon him and he was deluged with paper work. His devoted Staff mistakenly erected a zareba between Army Headquarters and the armies at home and abroad. From this zareba he emerged for the periodical meetings of the Viceroy's Executive Council, but otherwise he was but a dim figure behind a thorny hedge. His Staff might, and could, prevent the fighting men from coming in contact with the Chief; they could not debar tongues from wagging, and they wagged very freely indeed.

Duff, it may be added, had seen no regimental or field work since he was a major, but when he landed at Bombay he sought to assume the role of Lord Roberts—familiarity with various commanders. According to practice, the officers commanding units were summoned to meet him at the Apollo Bunder. It so happened that the infantry regiment stationed at Santa Cruz, on the outskirts of Bombay, was one of the localized battalions swept into the divisional organization but which had not lost its local characteristics. It was commanded by a complete Koi Hai,<sup>1</sup> on the careless eve of retirement, whose

<sup>1</sup> Literally, "Is anyone there?"—the call for a servant. In time it came to be applied to those using the call, and then, more generally, to an old-stager.

military ability was indicated when during a rehearsal of a night attack on Bombay he put his only mounted unit on top of a hill which could only be approached by a tangled bridle path, and the Navy, landing secretly, promptly mopped it up. "Ah," said Duff, "'Colonel Blimp,' we have met many times before." "Never met before, sir," was the stolid response. "Surely you are mistaken," Duff went on to say; "where was it? At Secunderabad?" "Never met before, sir," was the uncompromising answer, and then Duff gave it up as a bad job and turned with some relief to myself, for we had been companions during the big Army manoeuvres and in Calcutta.

One chapter was closed. The War Office took charge of the operations in Mesopotamia, and Maude, the supreme Staff Officer, hammered the disorganized troops into two armies. Money was poured out like water and brand-new river steamers were sent to replace the craft sunk on the outward voyages or worn out. The wits declared that these new boats were completely equipped, even to the point of carrying sets of obstetrical instruments; but their carrying power was so small that one Evacuation Officer insisted on using the old "P" steamers, with barges clamped on both sides. The misbegotten adventure in East Africa was remitted to South Africa, and critics were sure that it would endure throughout hostilities, because so many in South Africa were making a good thing out of it. India could look to herself, especially as the urgency of constitutional reform became more and more a preoccupation.

The barrel in India had been pretty effectively scraped, but with the menacing German assault in March the Home Government pressed for an even greater effort. The Government came to think that after nearly four years of war it might sit down and consider whether a serious attempt should not be made to organize public opinion behind the war effort. Enthusiastic conferences were held in Delhi and each provincial centre and half a dozen boards were set up with very vague objectives. Amongst these was the Central Publicity Board. These had been strenuous years for newspaper men. Half the staff away on military service; many hours spent with the Indian Defence Force, into which the Volunteers had

burgeoned under the pressure of providing for internal security; the hot weather was upon us. Towards the end of May, 1918, books and papers were packed into a sack and my wife and I set forth for the pleasant little bungalow which we maintained at the quiet Deccan station of Nasik, in the hope of a few days' rest and quiet. Vain hope. The day after our arrival and almost before the bags were unpacked there came an urgent wire from Simla—would I go forthwith and give counsel on the functions and organization of the Central Publicity Board. There could be only one answer, and Simla it was. The next months were amongst the most revealing of my days in India.

Was ever a Ministry of Information, to give it a comparable designation, set up in such circumstances? There was a nucleus organization under the Home Member, with representatives of the Army, the foreign and political departments, and three newspaper correspondents, only one of whom was of the slightest help. There was a secretary, a schoolmaster invalided out of the Territorials, and there were a few clerks. There was no plan, no clear objective; nothing could better illustrate the mentality of the Board than the attempt to import as the working head an insurance agent from Calcutta. Who had dared to intervene and make the reckless suggestion that perhaps a journalist might better fill the bill was not disclosed. Time pressed and I seized with avidity the opportunity of putting my pet theories into practice.

In the scheme of work three or four main principles were definitely laid down. The Board would advise, assist, furnish material, and so forth, but it would not attempt to administer or control; administration would be the sole prerogative of the Provincial Boards, with adequate funds for the purpose; these would be free from interference, but could call on the central body for any material or counsel they desired. When that note was laid before the Board for consideration the eyebrows of the official members were lifted, for this was not what they had in mind, nor was it the action decided before my arrival; but it went through without the alteration of a comma and was hailed with glee by all the provincial authorities. So much for the first step.

Time pressed with desperate earnestness and something had to be done at once. Looking back on those days, they seem really funny in revealing the mentality of the Government of India. The first demand was that each Sunday morning there should be telegraphed free to each daily newspaper in the land a thousand-word appreciation of the military situation. The Board was aghast. Never, no never, would the military authorities agree to such a revolutionary proposal. The Commander-in-Chief, General Munro, made no difficulty and forthwith deputed his Director of Military Operations to furnish the drafts. This was manna in the wilderness to editors, denied any access to military information, and in most cases unfamiliar with the geography of the war.

Then came the second objective—to make a serious effort to explain to the Indian people the immense significance of the German advance to the suburbs of Amiens and the repercussions of the Russian defeats on the position in Persia and the North-west Frontier. The wigs were on the green. Never, no never, said the Foreign Department, will we sanction mention of this subject. Never, no never, echoed the Political Department, will we agree to this being touched upon. Never, no never, chorused the Central Intelligence Bureau—in some ways the Indian counterpart of M.I.5—will we tolerate such folly. What a dead end, but there are generally ways round. I made the position clear beyond doubt. Propaganda was just beating the air unless it frankly discussed the questions uppermost in men's minds. One question dominated all others—the peril on the Western Front linked with the turmoil in the Caucasus. If these and kindred subjects were excluded, the Board had better wind up forthwith; for myself I would have nothing to do with it and should be better occupied in Bombay. At any rate, I would myself write a complete survey of the strategico-military position, in the form of a pamphlet; if that was rejected, then I was for home. Humph! There was a shaking of official heads. After confabulation the Foreign Department said: "Have it your own way, but we warn you that we shall sanction precious little." The pamphlet was written and it went through the interested departments. It came back "chewed up considerable," as Hannibal Chollop

would say? No; with the corrected spelling of a few Persian words. After that all was comparatively plain sailing.

It was only the first step. Lord Chelmsford called me one day and said he had been told I was returning to Bombay. "Sir," I explained, "I have done what you asked me to do. I have framed a policy and taken the steps to give it immediate expression. The relations between the Central Board and the Provincial Bodies are clearly and satisfactorily designed. A substantial beginning has been made with the actual propaganda and lines laid down for its development. What remains? The doctrine we have preached is that in time of war every man's services are at the disposal of the State. It is for you to decide where best mine can be employed." "I ask you," replied Chelmsford, "in the public interest and as a great personal favour, to see this business through. Now go away and fix your remuneration with the Finance Member." "Settled," I answered, "with one caveat. Your officials are seriously perturbed at the advent of this Wild Man of Bombay into the sacred purlicus of the Secretariat. They may find me impossible and yet hesitate to say so. I will remain until the end of July and, unless asked to stay longer, will fade out and no bones broken. As for remuneration, we can settle that here and now. I will not take any. You cannot offer me, nor would I take, what I am losing. A small salary is impossible. Further, there are millions of men doing far more than I can hope to do for a shilling a day and their rations." "Good," said Chelmsford. "If you have the slightest difficulty, come straight to me and say so." Knowing something of the workings of the official mind, I asked him to make that known; if he did, then I should never have to come to him; nor did any occasion arise. July came and went. The Wild Man remained; he was not so untamable after all.

Surely, never was a propaganda machine created under such conditions. The isolation of the Government of India from contact with public opinion was almost inconceivable.

Curzon described Simla as the workshop of the administration, and work there was in plenty. Pallid officials scorned delights and lived laborious days—with papers. The nearest daily newspapers were published at Lahore and Allahabad,

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six hundred miles away. *The Civil and Military Gazette* of Lahore never pretended to be more than a provincial organ, and the *Pioneer* of Allahabad was a daily magazine printed in Dootypore rather than a modern journal. For newspapers with an All India outlook Simla had to wait for the arrival of the dailies of Calcutta and Bombay, which were forty hours old by the time they were received. The news of the world circulated amongst the favoured ones in the form of scrappy messages through Reuter's agency, and these in bits and pieces defied intelligent appreciation.

No one was going seriously to read newspapers nearly two days old, especially when the vivid news of the day had been discounted, if scrappily, many hours before. The senior officials derived their knowledge of Indian politics largely through the confidential memoranda of the Central Intelligence Bureau. Now with all its merits this was a tainted source. Inevitably, the department looked on and recorded the worst sides of political activity; regular perusal of its records produced a jaundiced appreciation of the fast-growing political forces; everything which was natural and healthy was ignored.

In the domain of foreign affairs the overmastering influence was a terror of Afghanistan—one is almost inclined to say a craven terror. Admitted that the position in Kabul was extraordinarily difficult. Habibullah had warned the Government of India that he might be forced into strange ways to carry his people with him; he could not refuse the German and Turkish Missions, though he kept them at arm's length; and rather artfully he assuaged these Missions by promising co-operation after a division or two of German and Turkish troops reached him; but he urged that he must be trusted. He fulfilled that trust, only to be assassinated when the war was over. Still, were our relations with Afghanistan strengthened by a quiver of apprehension at the faintest mention of anything which might cause umbrage in Kabul?

We were, with our limitations, a happy family on the Board. But what limitations! There was the scratch organization of an inexperienced secretary and a few clerks, with a small bundle of photographs and papers. Owing to the disruption of



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sea communications, it took a month or six weeks to get any material from London, where the Ministry of Information was not particularly interested in the difficulties of India. The nearest printing presses were at Calcutta and Bombay; the only lithographing plant above the Western Ghats. We placed our chief reliance on the pamphlet and fed the Provincial Boards with a constant stream of authoritative information on all the main topics, leaving them to apply this knowledge to their own special needs, with translations into the vernaculars as they thought best.

Nothing bore the imprimatur of the Central Publicity Board; the issuing agency was the Oxford University Press, and copies were sold at a penny. A clever artist was discovered at Army Headquarters and effective posters printed by the Ravi Varma Press. Very soon our own illustrated review of the war was made available and circulated in its hundreds of thousands. We were a happy family, too, in our relations with the Provincial Boards. They were amazingly diversified. In the Punjab the working head was a member of the I.C.S. In the United Provinces Dr. Garfield Williams, of the missionary college at Gorakhpur, did admirable work, producing amongst other activities an excellent vernacular weekly; Madras enlisted another missionary educationist in Dr. McPhail; Bengal called in an able member of the I.C.S.; and in Bombay the Advocate-General took the place I was to have filled as chairman. This may be said without arrogance—during the last six months of the war there was a better appreciation of the course of events and understanding of the issues at stake than at any other period. One crowning disappointment was experienced. The advantage of having edited a newspaper is a realization that lots of people know more about lots of things than you do yourself.

The organization in closest touch with humble folk in India was the Salvation Army; Commissioner Booth Tucker was asked for his advice and it was this: If fifty people will listen to a speech, five hundred will gather to see magic-lantern slides and five thousand a film. So a film there had to be. The Army co-operated; a film illustrating the composition of the forces from the enlistment of the recruit to the finished

product was laboriously prepared, and the great day arrived when it could be tested by a censor from headquarters. Excellent, with one defect—the speed was so rapid that the figures rushed through the scene faster than man ever walked or ran, and the censor suggested that the machine should work more slowly. The operator obeyed, and in a second the whole caboodle went up in smoke as the celluloid caught fire. The work of five months was destroyed in as many seconds.

Knowing something of the work of Government Departments, I was resolute that, the emergency over, the Central Publicity Board should not have a lingering and wasteful death. So when the Armistice was signed the secretary was instructed to release, at any inconvenience, those of the temporary staff who could obtain any other service; of those who remained, twenty per cent would be retrenched every month. In the very last days the secretary pressed that he might take the remains of the corps to Simla, where they would have survived for months, forgotten and doing nothing. No; on 31 March, 1919, the last paper was despatched to the Home Department. The first financial provision for the Board and staff was £7,500; the final statement of account showed that only two-thirds of this sum had been spent. With this paper went a memorandum on the composition of a publicity department if occasion arose, prepared at the request of Chelmsford, and two points were insisted upon. They were that the propaganda head should always be a trained journalist; the first demand for more than a personal assistant, the first opening of a file, should be the signal for his replacement. When this was remitted to the Provincial Boards for their suggestions the response from the Punjab was significant, remembering that it came from a member of the Indian Civil Service. "You will note that I have insisted that this post should never be filled by one of the I.C.S. I have done that because if it is found that the job is worth taking, it will be said that only an I.C.S. man is competent to fill it."

One more footnote. Amongst the personnel of the Board was a junior official lent by the Government of Madras who was of quite exceptional attainments. I impressed on the Home Member that this man should not be sent back to

Madras to moulder in obscurity and that a place ought to be found for him in the Imperial Secretariat. He did his best and then came with a confession of failure. There was no possible opening. Why? Virtually all the Superintendents in the Imperial Secretariat were high-caste Bengali Brahmins. My protégé was a non-Brahmin; not even the Home Member could batter down this caste barrier.

Halfway through the war the Volunteers came by their own. Kitchener had urged all eligible to enrol in the Volunteers, and for good reason. Whilst ethically it may have been hard to justify the arming of a limited section of the civil population—enrolment was restricted to the British community and those of mixed parentage—the command of a reliable force, unmoved by racial and religious passion, at a time when the Police needed to be reinforced when order was challenged, was a great asset in the preservation of internal peace. The Light Horse in the Punjab and the United Provinces, in Calcutta and Bombay furnished mobile units held at the disposal of the civil power, and the Rifles in the great cities and composed of the railway personnel guarded the main lines of communication. They were rarely, if ever, called on to use their fire-power, but they served and waited, reliable auxiliaries in time of need. But many of the British community were far too ready to leave this service to a minority until enrolment was made compulsory in 1916.

Fearful and wonderful are—perhaps it is fairer to say were—the workings of the military mind! Early memories go back to duty with the 1st Gloucestershire Volunteer Artillery, which enjoyed the tremendous advantage of an officer commanding who was an ex-Gunner and the best of adjutants. Possibly in error, the regiment was trained on the assumption that the main purpose of an Artillery was to shoot and hit the target. Now this is no fanciful picture. At the annual inspection there were a few simple parade movements, and then words of counsel from the C.R.A. in a beautiful cocked hat. "The haversacks are not well folded." A year passed, and there was this tribute: "The haversacks are better folded, but some of the chin-straps are too long." Wonderful; but more was to follow. "The haversacks are better folded and the chin-straps

are properly adjusted; but several of the rank and file are wearing their hair too long." Never did the inspecting officer see a man on a gun or a shot fired; yet the regiment was good enough to win five prizes out of eleven at the annual Shoeburyness camp. When the scene moved to India the Light Horse wore helmets so fashioned that it was impossible to fire a rifle without turning them back to front; tunics so tight that a visiting card in the breast pocket caused a bulge; and the steed was cluttered up with a bit which weighed many pounds and a saddle which only a strong man could lift. Many of the troopers were horsed on "casters"—big artillery horses discarded because unequal to the strain of the Regular Artillery, but good for years of work nevertheless. It was not until the lessons of the South African War were learnt that a simple bit was substituted for pounds of steel; a light saddle introduced and a "Kitchener" helmet came from Egypt to give comfort and protection.

Memory goes back again to a scene at Aldershot when the Territorials were in training and Lord Haldane was standing on the high ground to watch their movements—a figure not easily forgotten. The broad, stooping shoulders which are said to go with great mental power; the unbrushed silk hat well on the back of the head—the biggest War Secretary since Cardwell. The talk went round to early days of the Volunteer movement and the discouragements it met. "Well, you in India," said Haldane, "have no complaint on that score." "No complaint," was the retort. "After our last inspection we could not have been more insulted if the inspecting officer had spat in my face." "Humph," said Haldane, "what do you mean by that?" "Just this. We prided ourselves on our cross-country work in the very broken ground of Salsette Island. We did a few parade movements, and then were told that we were the finest Light Horse the inspecting officer had tested." All was radically changed when compulsory service arrived, though it was not without its humours. Came a most efficient Sergeant-instructor with a sardonic humour. "What! 'Aven't you no intelligence?" he blurted out to the head of a great shipping company, who was roped in at the late stage. And to another who was over six feet tall: "I sees wot it is. I gets a

ideal into that 'head of yours, and by the time it gets to your feet it's lost.' The most brilliant scholar in the Indian Civil Service could never tell his right hand from his left and invariably turned to the right when the command was "Left turn." Nor did it raise the prestige of the commercial community when the first conscript to apply for exemption was the chairman of the Chamber of Commerce.

The Indian Defence Force was trained rapidly to a pitch of efficiency on which the civil power could rely, and when the Territorials who had arrived in tens of thousands were hammered into shape it furnished a reservoir from which the new Indian regiments could draw their officers. From its relatively small cadre the Bombay Light Horse sent forty-two men to the Front, who won seventeen decorations, including Victoria Crosses. With the end of the First World War their work was done; the Defence Force was demobilized and the Volunteers faded away. Still, it is refreshing to find so many of the "have beens" who in their retirement look back on this service as amongst the happiest years of their life, with the consciousness that they did what they were asked to do. These camps amid the palms and paddy; the long bivouacs under India's starry skies; the days in the saddle and the sleep of the really tired—these are glorious days to look back upon. We had only three rules in the Bombay Light Horse: Work them hard: feed them well: keep them interested—not bad rules for the cross-sections of society who are called to the Colours in the post-war world.

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THEY SAY WE ALL HAVE OUR HOBBIES; AND IT WAS EVER MINE TO IMPROVE THE CONDITION OF MY WORKPEOPLE, TO SEE WHAT GOOD TENEMENTS, AND GOOD SCHOOLS, AND JUST WAGES PAID IN A FAIR MANNER, AND THE ENCOURAGING OF CIVILIZING PURSUITS, WOULD DO TO ELEVATE THEIR CHARACTER

*Sybil or The Two Nations*

IT STARTLED MANY who thought they knew their India to learn, when the International Labour Office was established at Geneva, that the country was amongst the five great industrial nations of the world. India was always considered as a predominantly agricultural State, and so it is and for years must continue to be. At least seventy-five per cent of the people draw their livelihood from the soil. To the traveller coming fresh to the land the impression is one of an overwhelming agricultural economy.

The first contacts will almost certainly be made at Bombay, a great port in an unsurpassed harbour densely packed with a cosmopolitan population. The thirty-thousand-ton mail steamer steams as serenely round Colaba Point past the peninsula which protects the anchorage from the battering monsoon seas as does the *Queen Mary* up the Solent, and ties up alongside the Alexandra Dock easily and fast. From the quayside the mail trains radiate north, east and south to the Frontier, Calcutta and Madras.

If he has an hour or two to spare the newcomer will be lured into a drive round Malabar Hill, and from the high ground will look down on a forest of chimneys, smokeless chimneys now, for Bombay is the most electrified city in the world. If for a moment he descends into the bazaars he will learn what crowding can be, for, without any corresponding

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provision of housing accommodation, the city has to accommodate an additional million people, swollen by unabsorbed refugees. This is industrial India. Not a very lovely India, though much progress has been made with the housing of the migratory operative class, most of whom have their ancestral homes down the coast to which they periodically return; still an immense work remains to be done.

But the moment the traveller leaves the island of Bombay, and that is only eleven miles long, he plunges into rural India. On the thirty-six-hour journey to Calcutta he will discern no sign of industrial activity, save perhaps a glimpse of the arsenal at Jubbulpore, until he approaches the confines of Calcutta. If his route follows the more southerly track it will touch the textile industry again at Nagpur, and the fringe of the iron and steel works at Tatanagar, but again it will be palms and paddy, paddy and palms to the confines of Calcutta.

Even more impressive is the land to the north. Between Bombay and Peshawar little breaks the rural scene save a sprinkling of factories at Agra and Delhi; and on the south there is no industrialization until Madras is approached. From this there emerge two impressions—the vastness of the land, and the main concentration of industry in the ports. With this notable difference, Bombay being starved of space in a narrow island, much of it literally wrung from the sea, is terribly congested; the mills stand cheek by jowl; Calcutta, with its ample space, and the Hughli river as an artery of communication, has spread its jute mills for many miles up and down the waterside. Yet if the word congestion is breathed, it has little significance outside the close-packed hovels of Calcutta itself and the neighbouring town of Howrah, which is really part and parcel of the city.

Naturally Indian manufacturing industry found its first expression in the commodities where there were the raw material and the market on the spot—cotton and cotton textiles. The natural theatre was Bombay, with the cotton fields in the hinterland and a demand at home and abroad. Yet, oddly enough, the first cotton-spinning mill in India was erected in Calcutta, but the industry soon migrated to Bombay. Few can now recall the conditions in which it was

established. Capital was almost non-existent; the investing habit had not grown up; the enterprising entrepreneur went cap in hand to his friends for the means to start his mill.

It was not uncommon for the pioneer, having scraped the barrel of his own resources for a nucleus fund, to enlist the co-operation of a few associates and, having made a beginning, to mortgage his property and then get to work on the vicious practice of short deposits—the worst form of capital, because it is inevitably this money that is withdrawn at the first breath of adversity. Whilst this made progress painful and slow, it had one compensating advantage; the capital was kept low and expansion created by ploughing in profits.

The results in the best-managed concerns were startling. In the spinning and weaving mill with which I was most closely associated the ordinary capital was no more than £150,000, with no debentures and no preference shares; but the fixed assets—buildings, plant and so forth—represented an investment of over three-quarters of a million sterling. This was a very present help in time of trouble. From these there emerged the controlling interest peculiar to India—the Managing Agency system. Having pledged his all in the nascent enterprise, the pioneer naturally took pains to keep it substantially in his own hands. So the Managing Agent entered into an agreement with the company reserving to himself the direction of the concern for a return based on out-turn or profits, and, firmly entrenched, he could not be displaced except under the rigid terms of the contract.

At first this remuneration was based on out-turn—so much on every pound of yarn spun—and many a good mill staggered to bankruptcy whilst the Managing Agent was milking it even if selling at a loss. Gradually a commission on profits was substituted, generally ten per cent. There was another factor at work. The Banks would not advance on the general security of the company; they demanded the personal guarantee of the Managing Agents also—an additional reason why the entrepreneur fortified his control. Most mills, and in particular those specializing in higher-grade products, had to buy their cotton as it came on the market, and it was not uncommon for a really sound concern to draw on the Banks for



a-quarter of a million sterling so as to secure its supplies for a year ahead.

Many a storm raged round the Managing Agent system; but it has not been shaken, and legislative attacks have so far petered out. Having served under both it and the ordinary joint stock company, like the man who decided that honesty was the best policy having tried both, an objective view may be permitted. Where the Managing Agents are capable and honest the system has many advantages. It ensures continuity in direction and management, and provides a buffer against the attacks of ignorant and hysterical shareholders, always ready to be stampeded by an unscrupulous adventurer. In this way it gives a stability to Indian joint-stock enterprise unattainable under any other system. At its worst it places the investor at the mercy of an agent who can manipulate the concern for his personal benefit.

Between these two extremes, the Managing Agent, with his commission, represents a surcharge on industry and there is a regular traffic in "commissions." Does a company need a debenture loan? Well, the money is available, often under stiff conditions, but it is not forthcoming unless the lender gets a share in the commission. Is an amalgamation desirable? It can be done; but again only if the agents of the merging company are guaranteed a permanent share in the commission. These commissions, or surcharges, call them what you will, can attain fantastic proportions. This is not perhaps a typical instance but it indicates what can happen. A great corporation acquired control of an enterprise representing millions of capital, not by purchasing shares, not by taking a direct financial interest in the concern, but by buying from the Managing Agents, entrenched in their agreement, a major interest in the commission. For good or ill, however, the Managing Agency in Indian joint-stock enterprise has come to stay.

The mainstay of the textile industry was in the opening stages the export of yarn to the Far East. For this there was an abundant supply of raw material in short-staple cotton, generically known as Bengals in India and Surats in Lancashire. Nearly a century has elapsed since the American Civil

War and the blockade of the southern ports brought indescribable misery to Lancashire and unbounded prosperity to Western India. There may be some in Lancashire still who were told of the prayer of the minister during the cotton famine: "Lord, send us cotton, much cotton in many bales. But, Lord, let it not be Surats!"

There still linger in Western India memories of the golden era when the swollen price of the Indian staple brought in between £60 and £70 millions of new money and induced an orgy of speculation with painful effects on many good families. The mills ground out this short-staple cotton into yarns of low counts—eights and tens—and shipped it to Japan and China, this trade at its peak reaching eight hundred thousand bales in a single year. It was a short-lived spurt, for first Japan closed her market by protective duties, and then invaded and conquered China; thrown back on the internal trade, Bombay had to switch with many agonies from yarn to cloth. Then it found that whilst it had concentrated on the overseas trade in yarns, rivals in Ahmedabad, Sholapur and Nagpur had entered the home market and were advantageously situated to hold it. They were many hundreds of miles nearer the cotton fields and the consuming centres. It says much for the enterprise and resilience of the Bombay manufacturer that he overcame these obstacles, and, after substantial weeding out of the weaker brethren, produces today some of the best cloths in India. The steady work of the Government in improving the Indian staples furnishes him with an adequate supply of suitable cotton, which he can supplement by imports of long staples from Uganda, Egypt and the United States.

At the turn of the century there were 195 mills with 42,000 looms and about 5 million spindles in India. The growth of the industry is remarkable; on the eve of the Second World War, and excluding Burma separated under the Act of 1935 (this is a convenient date, for the war induced abnormal conditions), the figures had expanded to 370 mills, with 197,810 looms and 9 $\frac{3}{4}$  million spindles. The output of yarn at the same period was 1,160 million pounds and of cloth 864 millions. Nothing is more significant in these figures than the switch

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from yarn to cloth, although there will always be a demand for yarn to feed the handloom industry, which consumes 343 million pounds of yarn to yield 1,793 million yards of cloth. India ranks second only to the United States as a producer and exporter of raw cotton; it gives pride of place as a manufacturer only to the United States, the United Kingdom and Japan. This industry is broad based on the home market, for only six per cent of the production is exported.

Whilst the cotton textile industry was making heavy weather under the stress of overseas competition and other adverse factors which will be indicated later, the jute industry took firm root in Bengal. The moist climate of the East Gangetic plain, with an abundant rainfall, furnishes ideal conditions for the production of the plant; indeed, India has a virtual monopoly in jute. Cloth and bags made of jute, products of the handloom industry, were exported from India in the latter part of the eighteenth century, but it was not until the flax spinners of Dundee had turned their machinery on to the spinning and weaving of pure jute yarns and cloth a hundred years ago that "gunnies" and "hessians" appeared in world markets as the cheapest packing and wrapping materials. The first power-loom factory in India was erected on the banks of the Hughli River in 1859 and by the beginning of the century 15,000 looms were at work in Bengal. By the datum year already selected the exports of raw jute had risen to 747,000 tons; of manufactures to 1,020,000 tons; with a percentage of manufactures to the total of 1,767,000 tons, or fifty-eight per cent.

Whilst these two major industries were growing *pari passu*, on opposite sides of India, there were marked differences in their nature and scope. Once the Far Eastern market for coarse yarns was lost the cotton textile industry was broad based on the firm home demand; jute and jute products were dependent on overseas demands; it passed through violent vicissitudes. Periods of almost fantastic prosperity were interrupted by acute depressions, and Government action was invoked to balance production with demand.

Then in Bombay, which is a relatively small island, or rather a collection of islands welded into a whole by a series

of costly reclamations from the sea, the mills were inevitably concentrated in limited space; Calcutta, with its great riverain hinterland, was able to diffuse up and down the river, and indeed many of the mills are compact social and industrial entities. They have this in common: they draw their labour force from the rural areas, and with the hereditary attachment to the land great migrations set in every season. Perhaps this is more marked in Bombay than in Calcutta; apart from the weavers the labour force in the Bombay mills was described by a prominent industrialist—it is true today—as an agriculturist he was, and agriculturist he is and an agriculturist he will remain. This detachment of the labour force from the theatre of his work brings social and economic problems of an almost sinister character.

There is another contrast which does not leap so readily to the eye. How was it that the jute industry was mainly Scots, for the substantial Marwari entry into the field came later, whilst the textile industry was in predominantly Indian hands? Something was due to racial characteristics. The Bengali, despite his fine brain and rich culture—the best Bengali brain is the finest in India, linked with an appreciation of the arts rare in other provinces—did not take kindly to commerce. Eminent in the law and in administration, he left the sordid field of industry to others; indeed, the late Sir Rajendra Mukerji, one of the greatest gentlemen of his day, long stood alone as a conspicuous Bengali industrialist. If there is a keener trading community than is found in Western India it is difficult indeed to discover it.

Here, of course, the Parsi was the pioneer, but it is a common error to conclude that he stands alone; where the Parsi blazed the trail, the Khoja, the Bania, the Bhattia and the Deccani trod on his heels, and the Jew came from Baghdad to oust the Armenian, who went to Calcutta and left in Bombay only one trace of his influence—in Armenian Lane. Surely there is something more—an industrial mentality! The Scot said to himself: "If jute is to be spun and woven in the banks of the Hughli, I am going to do the job." Then he had an ampler command of capital; the cost of erecting and equipping a jute mill is two or three times that of a cotton factory.

The Lancashire lad, debauched by long prosperity, swollen in his own conceit, came to the comforting conclusion that cotton cloth could not be made elsewhere than in his own county and was content with the then flourishing export trade in textiles. Where the Briton became a sharer in this enterprise it was often as the keen-witted erector of machinery, or the mill superintendent, quick to see the open door, but bringing with him alongside his technical knowledge the limited marketing outlook of the glorified mechanic. Or as the head of an established importing house, anxious to widen his interests, but without any specialized acquaintance with the industry and thereby dependent on his technical staff, often imported, for the efficiency of his concern. Whatever the cause, the jute industries are still predominantly Scots; the cotton textiles industries Indian; and from these conditions there sprang very different approaches to the government of the day in all that related to the attitude of the administration to industry.

Why are jute products always described by British and Indian alike as "Hessians" and by Americans as "Burlaps"? The explanation is given for what it is worth, because it is an illuminating page from history. Of all the blunders committed by George III and his advisers, the most fatuous was the use of Hessian mercenaries in the American War of Independence. Well might Chatham thunder that if he was an American and asked to submit to these hired troops, he would reply: "Never, never, never!" The word Hessian stank in the nostrils of the American colonists. By that name neither Dundee nor Calcutta would have sold a gunny bag or a yard of jute cloth in the big American market. But Burlaps—a very innocuous term, so innocuous indeed that its etymology is unknown.

The rise of India amongst the industrial nations was founded on three staples—jute, cotton and tea; these three represented, until the Second World War came to disrupt all economy, fifty-eight per cent of the total exports of Indian merchandise raw and manufactured. The expansion of these staples into diversified industries, less susceptible to seasonal fluctuations, had to wait until the advent of protection, or, to use the more palatable term, tariff reform. Although the

Montagu-Chelmsford constitutional development still left final authority to Parliament, there was at once established the convention whereunder when the Governor-General-in-Council and the legislature were in agreement, the Home Government would not interfere, and a Tariff Commission recommended discriminating protection. Discriminating! Humph! That is an elastic adjective with little application to some of the duties imposed. The effect was almost immediate. Take sugar as an instance. India commanded all the means for the satisfaction of the general consumption of sugar—large supplies of cane, and an insatiable appetite limited only by the capacity to buy. Most of this cane was either eaten raw or converted into a crude brown sugar known as *gur*.

The spectacle of Indians walking the streets chewing a foot of cane is common throughout the land, and at every fair or *tamasha* little handmills squeeze out a proportion of the juice which is greedily swallowed. At the end of the growing season teams of professional sugar-makers toured the cane districts with their large shallow pans and primitive presses, boiling down the juice and feeding the fires with the crushed cane. *Gur* had good qualities; it was pure like the delicious muscovado sugars which used to come from the West Indies; but the process was painfully wasteful and left unsatisfied the growing call for refined sugar.

Before the advent of Lord Curzon most of this came from the Continent, fed by bounties which defied competition, with a supplement from Mauritius; Curzon scotched the bounty-fed imports by imposing countervailing duties, but the effect was transitory. The movement came at an inopportune time, for, shut out from the United States by Cuba after the war with Spain, the highly efficient Dutch producers were hungry for new markets and exploited India with consummate ability. In the pre-war year India imported 803,000 tons of sugar, of which 583,000 tons came from Java. Against these adverse conditions one or two British firms struggled courageously in Cawnpore and Madras to keep the refining industry alive, eking out their scanty profits, or setting against loss, by the distillation of rum. But with the imposition of a protective tariff a regular spate of sugar factories set in and these

## THE FERMENT OF INDUSTRY

increased from 32 to 146 in the 'thirties. The Government lent a hand by the intensive study of improved varieties of cane, and India became self-supporting in the matter of sugar with a consumption round about a million tons.

Much the same story can be told of cement. The traditional building material of India is stone, or brick and timber; the carved beams of the older houses are a joy to the eye where they remain. At the turn of the century, under the cheap steel beams from the United States, India switched over to steel and brick, or brick and cement. From that it was a short cut to reinforced concrete, which is now the almost universal medium for buildings of a substantial character. Cement factories sprang up all over the country, well distributed in order to overcome the handicap of freight on a bulky material, and there is no need to look abroad for supplies. Under the stimulus of a tariff, Indian industry expanded from the three staples of jute, cotton and tea into a fairly diversified field and more stable conditions; minor industries were like mushrooms, springing up in the night and wilting in the day, but not without leaving a residuum in articles in general demand such as matches and cigarettes. The industrial development of India was well on the way long before the advent of independence and contained the seeds of growth from within, but there was still one handicap: this was penny-in-the-slot industry. The investor put his money into businesses which promised an immediate return; he boggled at an enterprise which embodied the long-term view and the capacity to wait, if impatiently, for deferred profits.

There was only one man who looked boldly to the future, and, peering beyond the hand-to-mouth practice of his compeers discerned the possibility of an India which would embrace the complete economic cycle. That man was Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata.

Few men in the realm of industry have rendered greater services to the land of their birth than J. N. Tata. The distinguishing feature of his life was that he was never content with the conventional role. The beginnings of the textile industry of Bombay were established before he entered the field; but, whilst his contemporaries were content to grind

out low-grade yarn for the Far Eastern markets and coarse cloths for the home demand, he looked farther afield; selecting Nagpur in the Central Provinces, he put down his cotton mill in the centre of the cotton-growing lands and catered for the proximate markets. The prosperity of the Empress Mills he established against the advice of all his friends reads like a dream; his ambition was that the concern should pay a hundred per cent; in 1920 the original holders of the scrip were drawing three hundred and sixty per cent.

Whilst other industrialists paid little heed to the lot of their workers once they had passed outside the mill gates, he bent his energies to the social responsibilities which we call today by the generic name of welfare work. Although in close touch with him and his sons for many years, I look back with amazement at the scope of his activities. Money was never to him an end in itself. Not that he was indifferent to the many things wealth can bring. He loved travel; he was a splendid spender; although abstemious himself, he did not scorn the pleasures of the table and was a generous host. At a time when the successful Indian merchant of the day was content to dwell in the family house in the overcrowded and not too healthy bazaar of Bombay, he built himself a splendid mansion overlooking the breezy *maidan*. He desisted the decaying silk industries of Mysore and imported Japanese craftsmen to put them on modern lines.

Whilst other investors looked askance at the leasehold conditions attached to the new lands freed by reclamation and the auctioning of the areas too long held sterile by the Government, he built everywhere and well; most of these properties appreciated a hundred per cent after his death. He had an intense pride and affection for the city of his birth, and when a friend protested against the intense discomforts of hotel life in Bombay he growled out: "I will build one." Where the young lions of my generation used to take a whiff of sea air, and in the fair season scull down the harbour, he raised at the cost of a quarter of a million pounds the Taj Mahal Hotel and engaged a first-class staff to manage it. Yet embracing as these activities were, they were no more than the prelude to his constructive work.



Surveying the field of industry, there is refreshment in the knowledge that often the inspiration to development came from Englishmen, though the actual exploitation was in Indian hands. It was a Briton, Lord Reay, when Governor of Bombay in the 'eighties, who warned India that she stood at the parting of the ways. The universities, based on a literary curriculum, had done their work. Few lines of criticism are more misdirected than those which attack the foundations of the Indian educational system. The universities were established to meet the immediate needs of the hour—the provision of educated and efficient administrative services—and they discharged that role admirably.

All acquainted with the facts recognized the heightened standard of the Indian services which accrued from the influx of graduates educated through the English language, who carried into their work the ideals and the outlook which are instinct in that tongue. The fault, if fault it was, lay in the fact that they became stereotyped; and when this immediate need was fully satisfied and India was hungry for scientific and vocational training, the colleges and universities continued to concentrate on a literary education providing an increasing class of graduates for whom there was no economic outlet.

Lord Reay insisted that higher education could no longer develop if the universities remained mere examining bodies, based as they were on the London example; and that the time was ripe for the evolution of the teaching university. The advice fell on receptive ears and J. N. Tata decided to fill the gap. He sent one of his trusted lieutenants, B. J. Padshah, a college professor of unbounded enthusiasm and complete devotion to his task, round the world to study what other nations were doing; Sir William Ramsay was brought from Britain to lend the weight of his scientific knowledge and experience; and a quarter of a million pounds were set aside to finance the scheme. Long and wearisome was the road to achievement; it had not been trodden to the goal when Tata died; but his sons accepted the trust, and, aided by a large grant from the Government of India, and a generous gift of land and money by the Maharajah of Mysore, The Indian

Institute of Science took root in the pleasant surroundings of Bangalore; it has kept its standards high and established itself as the foremost institution of advanced science in the East.

Turn to another field. Bombay possesses one of the finest harbours in the world, and as a window to the West is the natural Gateway to India. It commands that further great asset—a virile and enterprising commercial population. But for long it laboured under the disadvantage of long distance from the source of industrial power. In the early days of its growth the furnaces of the textile mills were fed by coal from South Wales and Yorkshire. Then it switched to the nearer supplies of Natal. The next stage was to draw on the developing coalfields of Bengal, twelve hundred miles away. This long haul, or even the rail-cum-sea route by way of Calcutta, added such heavy freight charges that the cost of coal was multiplied five or six times between pit mouth and the boiler houses. It was an Englishman, David Gostling, a practising architect with a fertile mind, who directed Tata's eye to the potentialities of water-power crying for development in the chain of hills running parallel to the coast called the Western Ghats. As the rain-bearing monsoon draws nigh the Indian coast it is sucked in and impinges on these hills, and in the four months of the year when it blows strongly deposits a rainfall of anything from three hundred to six hundred inches. Then there is a fall of eighteen hundred feet to plain level and the market of Bombay city less than a hundred miles away.

"Store this water," cried Gostling, "and put down your turbines and generators at the foot of the hills!" "Store this water I will," replied Tata: and his sons did. Bombay is now one of the most completely electrified cities in the world, for all its mills and other factories are driven by hydro-electric power, and the distributing agency carries current into every home. There are thousands of tenement rooms with but a single light; electric power does much to relieve the burden on the poor.

Before electric power was available the mill-worker at the end of a full day in the mill ground her handful of grain in the little handmill before the family could eat. Now she takes it to the power machine, probably housed in a single darksome

room, where for a few farthings it is turned into flour ready for the round flat cake—the chupatty—which is the staple food of India. But, like *Oliver Twist*, Bombay is calling for more, the resources of the proximate Ghats are fully developed with the quarter of a million horse-power which the lakes supply, and the Government is looking farther afield. The more distant Koyna valley, which was surveyed in Tata's day, and put aside because there was no market for the power, is coming under review and should not be postponed.

It was a Briton, one of the far-sighted Gunners to whom India owes much, who kindled interest in another epoch-making enterprise. At the turn of the century, Major R. H. Mahon, Superintendent of the Government Ordnance Factories to Cossipore, produced a prophetic report; he declared that the time had come for the establishment of an iron and steel industry on the most modern scale. That suggestion also fell on Tata's receptive ears. It was an uphill fight. No one dreamt that the large capital involved could be found in India, and the project was hawked round Britain and the United States with negative results. There it was—a mountain of high-grade iron-ore in the eastern territories; a sufficient supply of good coking coal, with limestone and manganese within easy reach; and a hungry market for pig and steel. But Britain, who had played a valuable part in the industrial development of the land, was shy; America was busied with her own affairs; and this essential factor in the industrial cycle seemed no more than a dream. That it was realized was in no small degree due to the inspiration of Lord Sydenham, then Governor of Bombay. Why go cap in hand abroad, he said to Sir Dorab Tata, on whose shoulders the mantle of his father had fallen. Why not mobilize India's own resources?

The result astonished the land. The whole of the capital required, well over a million and a half sterling, was promptly subscribed, and when more was needed a single Prince, the Maharajah of Gwalior, invested £400,000 from the resources of his State. That is how the steel city of Jamshedpur came into existence; literally wrung from the jungle, much of the unskilled work done by the descendants of the aboriginal tribes, with its annual production of a million and a quarter

tons of pig iron and a million tons of steel, and forty thousand workers. Round this nucleus there has grown a whole series of ancillary industries—agricultural implements, tin plates, synthetic fertilizers, railway waggons, and here in the not distant future will be the locomotive works which will feed the Indian railways. The economic cycle was complete.

The fertilizing influence of these remarkable developments went far beyond their physical attainment. They definitely marked the emergence of Indian industry from what has been called the penny-in-the-slot mentality to the stage of major enterprise; whilst for as far ahead as one can see there will be scope for the investment of overseas capital, in Indian industry dependence on this source has passed. The Indian capital thrown into the work in this unprecedented scale fructified and enriched the community. No longer had the bolder spirits to go cap in hand to their friends for the thousands needed for a new mill or a new factory; they could rely on a rapidly expanding investing public to furnish all the capital needed, even if it ran into millions. Bombay had long been the money and bullion hive of India, and the honey poured forth from the profits was retained within the community instead of going abroad; it was used with a courage and enterprise, and went into sugar factories and cement works as well as buttressing Government loans. Bombay became the rentier of India, and, years before the Second World War threw its blight over the world, it was reasonable to assume that three or four million pounds came into the city every year from investment in enterprises in other parts of India. What money-spinners they were! If they were bold adventurers, and if the profits were big, they were also splendid givers.

Other parts of India were wont to cavil at what they called the palaces of the Bombay capitalists—the fine houses they built for themselves on Malabar and Cumballa Hills; when it came to a clash between the industrial and agricultural interests in the legislative bodies the Bombay capitalists had few friends. Yet no city owed more to the generosity of its citizens and few as much. The Parsis led the way. When any influential member of that remarkable community passed to his fathers through the Towers of Silence, where the dead

bodies were exposed to the vultures so that the earth should not be defiled, the first question asked was how much he had left for charity. The funds of the Parsi *punchayet*—the body which administers the gifts of successive generations—run into millions.

The splendid Gateway of India, through which the high-up ones pass on festival occasions, was the gift of a Sassoon. The Science Institute, another Sassoon monument; the University owes its convocation halls to the Cowasji Jhangier family and its graceful clock-tower to Premchand Roychand. From the old Fort area to the centre of the island one fine endowment after another bears witness to this philanthropic spirit. The Gokuldas Tejpal Hospital; the great group of hospital buildings at Parel—the Jamsetji Jijibhai, the Bai Motlibhai Maternity Hospital, and the Cowasji Jhangier Ophthalmic Hospital with the Grant Medical Hospital form the nucleus of the greatest centre for the treatment and study of disease in Asia, for out of them grew in later days the noble King Edward Hospital, the Sunderdas Medical College, and the Wadia Maternity Hospital, together with the Tata research endowment. True, many of these earlier foundations were accepted on very easy terms; the endowment barely covered the cost of the building and the far greater expense of the upkeep was borne by the Government, or in the case of the King Edward Hospital, one of the finest of its kind, by the Municipality. But without the original gifts, when money was scarce, the work would not have begun. If any are inclined to look askance at what is sometimes called the plutocracy of Bombay, let them find a parallel in Asia for this outpouring of philanthropic generosity.

This rising community of industrialists, developing in strength and assuredness, should have been the strongest pillar of the British connexion with India. Unfortunately two measures were taken which weakened the confidence of the industrial classes in the good faith of Britain, not so much distrust of the Government of India, but of a House of Commons sensitive to the currents of commercial opinion, and of the India Office largely dominated by the views of the City of London. These measures touched at the sorest point

the prosperity of the struggling manufacturing industries—they were the cotton excise duties and the management of the currency.

There is no more misbegotten episode in the chequered history of the Commonwealth and Empire than the abuse of parliamentary power to force on India that hateful excise and the sole responsibility stands to the discredit of the House of Commons. In 1879 the Viceroy, the flamboyant Lord Lytton, overruling his experienced colleagues in Council, forced on India a free import policy—to call it free trade is a preposterous misnomer. Arid successors carried their Cobdenite theories to the extreme limit and for all practical purposes the tariff disappeared. In 1894 the government of the day had to face the serious position arising from the immediate and prospective loss of revenue accruing from the manufacture and sale of opium, the ordinary sources of taxation were at the limit, and some new field had to be tapped. It was decided to levy a general import tariff for revenue purposes of five per cent. Lancashire sprang to arms; it had a virtual monopoly of the textile trade and trembled with indignation at the suggestion that it should suffer this trifling impost.

Instead of putting its own house in order, and establishing direct contact with the market, Lancashire took the lazy and fatal course of bringing the pressure of its voting strength on the government of the day. Against the strong opposition of the Government of India, the five per cent general tariff was reduced to three and a half on cotton textiles, and a counter-vailing excise was imposed on the products of the Indian mills.

Never did an excise more richly deserve Johnson's definition of a hateful tax. It was a running ulcer in Indian economy. Year by year the Indian industrialist had to take from his generally meagre profits the sums necessary to pay the tax; in bad years he was forced to add to his losses. Year by year, when the incidence of the excise had to be adjusted, there were acrimonious disputes between the Government emissary and the Indian millowner. It was worse than that. It was a clear indication to the country that if there were a clash between British—or supposedly British—interests and those of India

the British interests expressed through the House of Commons would prevail. There was not a pin to choose between the political parties; Liberal, Conservative and Labour were tarred with the same brush. What was perhaps even more exasperating to the Indian publicist was the unctuous humbug with which this hateful tax was justified; it was supported by the fatuous argument that it was in the interest of the Indian people, as if there could possibly be any advantage to a poor people, dependent on cotton cloth to cover their nakedness, in being forced to pay three and a half per cent more for their dhoties than the commercial cost!

Readers of the *Official History of the First German War* will come across the passage which records that the Home Government "accepted" a contribution of a hundred million to the cost. "Accepted"—that is a boss word in this connexion. India was pressed to make this contribution; and did so with good grace and public support, but on condition that the interest and service of the necessary loan were met from the tariff. Even then Lancashire sought to secure exemption by an increase in the excise, only to be met by the stubborn resistance of the doughty defender of Indian interests, the Finance Member, Sir William Meyer. That was the first movement towards the extinction of the levy; but, like many other episodes in the history of the Commonwealth, it came too late.

The effect of the excise was that Lancashire did not sell another yard of cloth to India, nor was the Indian millowner in the long run prevented from installing a spindle or a loom; but there was the uneasy sense that in a conflict between British and Indian commercial interests the power of Parliament would be employed on the British side. This was no inconsiderable factor in inducing the large subscriptions from Indian industrialists to the funds of Mr. Gandhi's independence campaign. Whether such subscribers were happy when the first Independence Budget was produced is another story.

Another factor shaking the confidence of industrial and commercial interests in the impartial action of the Home Government was the management of the currency. That is a

long and tangled story, and with the shattering of all standards under the impact of the two German wars, and currency a question of rationing and control, it is now only of academic interest.

The Indian currency was based on the silver rupee, with a note issue readily converted into coin. Before 1873 the rupee was fairly steady at two shillings; readers of Hickey's lurid memoirs will recollect that when his varied career in India came to an end he scraped together a lakh of rupees, which represented £10,000, and lent to the East India Company at ten per cent which brought him an income of £1,000 a year. Thereafter world conditions induced a steady decline in the value of silver and the Government of India was at its wits' end to know how to meet the remittances to London known as the Home Charges. These then amounted to about £16 million a year. A great deal of nonsense was talked and written about the Home Charges; ignorant critics dubbed them a drain on India. They never were anything of the sort; for the most part they represented interest on loans invested in remunerative public works—railways and irrigation—and only a small proportion in pay and pensions, for which India had received very good value. But they had to be met and, with a falling exchange, they developed into an increasing embarrassment to the finances.

For instance, with the rupee at par, two shillings, a thousand rupees would purchase £100 in England; with the rupee at one shilling and threepence the same number of rupees purchased no more than £62 10s. There was reason to fear that the fall would not stop at one and threepence; that a situation might arise when the rupee was worth no more than a shilling; and none could discern a source from which the necessary funds could be drawn. At a later stage the Indian budget was aptly described as a gamble in rain—it was so dependent on the monsoons—and during these anxious years the budget was literally a gamble in exchange.

Wisely, therefore, the mints were closed to the free coinage of silver in 1893; the rupee slowly climbed to one shilling and fourpence; a strong commission was set up to carry this expedient to completion. That commission produced one of



the most lucid and convincing schemes in the history of currency; it was in large measure the work of Lord Chalmers, then one of the bright stars of the Treasury. The currency and exchange system officially adopted was a gold standard supported by a gold currency, with a permanent ratio of the rupee to the sovereign of fifteen to one, or one and fourpence to the rupee. It postulated the free circulation of gold; the free movement of the precious metals; and an increasing holding of liquid gold accumulated from the profit on the coinage of rupees. This was pegged by the undertaking of the Secretary of State, nowhere made legally binding, to sell Council Bills on India to a limited extent and Reverse Councils on London at gold point. Exchange was stabilized at one and fourpence and the Finance Department breathed again.

Unfortunately, the official acceptance of this policy was not made statutory and the India Office played ducks and drakes with it by administrative action. The liquid gold was invested in gold securities; one petty objection after another was raised and the gold mint was not established; the City took alarm at the demand for sovereigns; and instead of a gold standard and a gold currency an entirely different standard was set up, with a relatively small circulation of gold, an immense token currency of silver rupees and of notes convertible into silver rupees, with an insignificant reserve of liquid gold. Against this departure from the recognized policy by administrative action *The Times of India* thundered. It was not long before justification came. In the autumn of 1907, protracted until the following year, the breakdown of banking credit in the United States led to a demand for what were dubbed Reverse Councils, or Bills on London. The India Office was caught on the wrong foot; the reserve of liquid gold was so small that it hesitated and investments had to be hurriedly liquidated at substantial loss. The emergency passed; the uneasiness remained.

When war befell the currency underwent a startling reversal. So far from the menace being a fall in silver, there was a disruptive rise; the Government was sore beset to meet the trade demand for rupees.

The exchange value of the rupee had perforce to rise with

the higher price of silver, and alas the India Office dashed into a confused currency world long before the time was ripe for action. A commission, a very weak commission, sat in London; it brushed aside the strong advice of the official with wide knowledge of Indian finance, Sir Lionel Abrahams; it turned a deaf ear to the one authoritative Indian member of its body, Sir Dadabhai Dalal; and it rushed in where angels would have feared to tread. It recommended the revaluation of the exchange value of the rupee at two shillings gold. That recommendation was accepted by the Government of India, always befogged by the Home Charges, and it inaugurated a period of fantastic speculation and easy money beyond the dreams of avarice for those who profited; disaster to the victims.

Before this disastrous adventure was abandoned the Government had lost £55 million of its gold reserves; scores of private banking accounts were the fatter. The highest rate obtained was two shillings and elevenpence farthing for the rupee; once the walls of Government sales were down the rupee fell to just above one shilling and threepence.

Nor were these the only catastrophic results. India was starved of imported goods during the war and huge orders were placed as soon as the armistice was signed at the very top of the market; deliveries were slow, and by the time the merchandise arrived prices had slumped; the importer was left with the double loss—payment in rupees at one and threepence when he had expected two shillings and sixpence, and goods which were not worth much more than half the price at which they were contracted. It was two years or more before this tangle was straightened out. It was left to Lord Kennett, as the chairman of a very competent commission, to put the currency on a sound basis, and incidentally to justify all the criticisms of the previous quarter of a century. How refreshing it was to deal with a man who really understood his job!

I was invited to give evidence before the three commissions, either by the Government or the commercial community, and found in Lord Kennett a man who really was a master. Unfortunately he succeeded to a controversial legacy. The

rupee had climbed to the long-established ratio of one and fourpence; the then Finance Minister, Sir Basil Blackett, was implored to peg it at that point. He turned a deaf ear and forced the exchange value to one and sixpence; so the commission was confronted with the *fait accompli*. A great opportunity was missed of removing the exchange from the sphere of controversy, but in justice to Sir Basil I believe he was pressed from London to force the rupee up to one and eightpence and compromised on the intermediate figure.

These two hapless incursions into exchange and industry created in the rapidly rising Indian business community a deepening distrust of the attitude of Parliament as represented by the India Office. For the excise duties on Indian textiles there was no excuse; it was a reversion to the worst mercantilist practices; the mishandling of the currency was honest error, but was not so regarded in India.

Free from London interference, the Government of India, notwithstanding the tendency to aloofness inherent in a bureaucracy, lent substantial aid to the growth of industry. It used the Land Acquisition Act to facilitate the hydro-electric development of Bombay; it built the railways and prescribed low freights for the iron and steel works; when that basic industry was threatened with collapse in the slump of the 'twenties, it carried, in the teeth of opposition from the agricultural interest, a protective measure which saved it. But between the Government of India and executive action too often hung an iron curtain. One of the shrewdest Indians of my day, Sir Ibrahim Rahimtulla, burst into this indignant protest: "I don't care if you make your Council and your Civil Service entirely British. But for heaven's sake give us a Government which can govern. We meet the Executive face to face, in the Legislatures and elsewhere. Sometimes we can convince it; but between it and effective action stands the ban of Parliament and we are beating the air."

Another forgotten factor. Over a long series of years the balance of trade in favour of India was liquidated in gold and silver. At first this was entirely in silver; with fixity of exchange, say from 1898 onwards, the imports of gold steadily advanced; this bullion represented the "store of value" in

a land where banking facilities were poor and the memory of the days of insecurity lingered. The London market hugged the delusion that India was a sink of the precious metals—that what went in would never come out, and hence the diversion of the natural flow of gold. Those who took the long view never accepted this theory; they held firmly that whilst India bought gold and silver when it suited her purpose, equally she would sell if the time was opportune. Wisdom was justified of her children. In the years immediately following the abandonment of the gold standard by Britain the precious metal emerged in a steady stream; it built up for the authorities a reserve in sterling estimated at £120 million, and had a powerful effect in stabilizing the world position created by Britain's dropping of the established standard.

Industrialization in a sub-tropical country can never be a lovely thing; industrialization in the conditions of India can well be the breeding ground of discontent and revolution. In the chief centres, Bombay and Calcutta, the labour force is drawn from the rural districts, in Western India from the strip of poor and over-populated territory known as the Konkan. Put crudely, the migrant spends just so much of his time in the mills as will allow him to return to his village, look after his land, and enjoy a spell of idleness until his funds run out. There is a great outward movement on the eve of the monsoon, April and May; and a return when the rains are over in October.

The worst feature of industry is the divorce between the employer and his workpeople. Labour is recruited by the jobber or the sirdar, and the operative, always in the grip of the moneylender in his home, is under the thrall of the jobber in his work. Intensive labour in a steamy atmosphere, or in the torrid heat of upper India, is a terrible physical strain, and on occasion this has passed the limits of humanity. All unthinking, the Bombay millowners in a period of unusual prosperity extended the hours of work to twelve per day, and it needed a vigorous stimulus to get a statutory reduction to ten. That is far from the worst aspect of a rapid development of manufacturing enterprise.

On my journalistic occasions in Bombay I frequently went

abroad with the municipal health officer to see how the poor lived. The housing unit is the single room. At best this is not more than a couple of hundred square feet, with a small verandah and washing-place; too often without either verandah or washing-place. Even before the desperate overcrowding which has arisen from the influx of refugees and the cessation of building since the war the custom during the dry season was for the men to sleep on the pavements and the women and children indoors; when the rains came a temporary platform was raised within the tenement and the occupants double-banked. Some progress was marked under the Improvement Trust and a few of the mills housed a proportion of their operatives; but on assuming office Lord Lloyd was confronted with the demand for at least sixty thousand additional tenements.

Better housing! The recent official figures given by the Municipal Commissioner of Bombay are so staggering that they could be unbelievable if they came from a lesser authority. Seventy-one per cent of the tenements of Bombay City consist of single rooms; the average number of persons in these rooms is far above the overall figure of ten, and "there are cases in my knowledge where as many as thirty and forty persons are supposed to occupy the same room." Making allowance for the exceptional arrival of refugees and halving that figure, some idea of the conditions of life in a sub-tropical industrial city can be gleaned. Of Calcutta others must speak, but here is an arresting passage from the reminiscences of Lieut-Gen. Sir Francis Tucker, K.C.I.E., who in the days which immediately preceded independence had exceptional opportunities of studying local conditions: "In and around Calcutta are *bustees*, dilapidated slum areas, the greatest eyesore in the city. They not only exist in outlying areas, but right in the middle of the town, and close against living-quarters of better-class people. They consist of a collection of low mud hovels, roofed with bamboo poles and usually covered with tiles. Sanitation, washing facilities and water supply do not exist. There are sometimes two and even three families living in the same squalid quarter, the door being four or five feet high and the greatest height of the roof seven

or eight feet. They are hotbeds of tuberculosis and other diseases."

Exploited by the moneylender in his own village—and the problem of agricultural debt is baffling; exploited by the jobber and sirdar in the mill; divorced from any real contact with the employer and living under these wretched conditions, the industrial proletariat is meat for the intriguer, whether he be a communist or revolutionary. It is not so much a question of low wages, these have grown out of all proportion to output; but of the simplest elements of a decent life. The tasks which confront the independent Government of India are vast beyond comprehension, and this is the most urgent of all. Unless rapid progress is made in provision for the elementary needs of the industrial army the foundations of Indian society may well be shaken beyond repair.

## THE FERMENT IN SOCIETY

YOU CANNOT ATTAIN THE SPEED OF THE MOTOR-CAR  
IN THE LAND OF THE OX-CART

*Sir Harcourt Butler*

WE WERE SITTING in the later inter-war years in the lofty dining-hall of the Byculla Club, so characteristic of the old Anglo-India in its white-and-gold spaciousness, and Sir Harold Butler was the chief guest, a round dozen of us. Turning to me, he asked what was the greatest social change I had seen in my thirty years. "Look around," I retorted, "there are twelve of us sitting here; eleven are drinking water and the twelfth beer. Now when I landed in Bombay in 1897 if anyone was seen drinking water he would have been treated as courting an early death from typhoid or cholera; if he were a beer-addict, then we looked for the news that he had developed a hobnailed liver." It was perhaps as well not to inquire what these water drinkers had imbibed before sitting down.

Mine was the whisky-and-soda age. The brandy pawnee of Jos Sedley and his kin passed when phylloxera destroyed the vines of France. Shrewd Scots doctors shook their heads at the idea of drinking claret or burgundy, and with keen eyes on the prosperity of their own country cautioned patients: "A little whisky, my dear fellow; that is the tippie for you." Water was abundant but so contaminated that ordinary filtration was no guarantee of immunity from bacteria, and careful folk would not even have ice in their drink lest it should have picked up a multitude of germs in the handling. Whisky and soda was drunk in vast quantities, in the long tumblers now extinct, which held the burra peg, or the ordinary glasses, the chota peg, but so weak that it was an abomination to the guest from home. How often would the

stranger within the gates, having sipped this mawkish fluid—it was carefully doled out by the servitor in peg measures like double egg-cups—plaintively ask if he could have a little more whisky? Beer, of course, there was. Bass came in generous flagons holding well over a pint; Kellner's of Calcutta imported a noble beverage in imposing hock bottles. For many years the labels of Ind Coope bore the designation India Pale Ale, and an uncommonly good light beer it was. But the only man who drank Bass regularly was met with headshakings, and his friends kept their top hats furbished in readiness for his funeral. In a sub-tropic climate burial followed in as few hours as possible after death.

The revolutionary factor in Anglo-Indian society was the coming of the motor-car.

What was the lure to most of the Britons who sought a career in the East? The horse and the gun. The horse, whether the Brumby from Australia or the Arab from the Gulf, was within the reach of every griffin, even if he arrived at the standing salary of £20 a month. With his Arab steed and a subaltern's cart he was equipped with transport, and a mount for the hunt or a chukker at polo twice a week.

My first transport outfit—a sixteen-hand Waler and a high-wheeled dogcart—cost £35 and not much more than two guineas a month for maintenance; those figures had to be multiplied by six for the most modest car. There was rough shooting twenty miles from Bombay, and kindly forest officers were so hospitable that there were always days in the jungle. The Christmas Camp, in any part of India, out with the gun all day and then a noble feast on the spoils under the stars with the camp-fire blazing—good was it in those days to be alive. Afterwards? The horse and gun became as unfamiliar to the Briton as to the bank clerk at home; the tennis racket and the golf-club reigned in their stead.

The advent of the motor-car went far deeper than this change in the life of the Briton. A sage official, deprecating the impatient idealism of clamant members of the legislature, warned them that they could not expect the pace of the motor-car in the land of the ox-cart. With very small and scattered agricultural holdings and embanked rice-fields the scope of



the tractor must be limited. There used to be no more familiar sight than the procession of bullock-carts trailing into the great cities at the end of the cold weather, after the rain crops were garnered, for the service of the cotton and grain trades. That must be diminished now, for the heavy lorry does most of the work. When the festivals came round in due season the peasant mounted his goods and family on the bullock-cart and made his way to the sacred places at the easy pace of two miles an hour. Now it is the motor-bus in tens of thousands which takes him to the market-town and to Mother Ganges; the isolation of the villages was broken down and this had a powerful influence on the spread of political excitements. Add to the motor-bus the bicycle, and Indian rural life has a mobility undreamt of by our forebears.

The arrival of the car also induced a re-discovery of India. The Grand Trunk Road from Calcutta to Peshawar always retained its special character, though it emerged from Calcutta in such a tangle of mean streets that few residents knew where it began. Its bustling, varied life is preserved in the imperishable pages of *Kim*, and scarcely less effectively in a little book which ought to be better known, *Kullu of the Carts*. But the old Delhi-Bombay Road was so completely lost to sight that when the first motor trials in India were planned it had to be traced out by a pilot expedition, and the facilities for accommodation were so few that the only means of feeding the competitors was by moving a special train with restaurant-cars from point to point.

The trunk road which Wellington's regiments trod from Southern India to the coast has not been fully revived yet, but from Poona, the capital of the Deccan, it is possible to take the bus and travel over a radius of four hundred miles. Less and less every year is India a land of remote and self-contained villages; the peasant is in vivid contact with the excitements of political life.

Of course, much of this was inevitable. The growth of the principal cities where the Briton mostly dwells drove them farther afield; where generations took their morning ride on the sands of the western foreshore of Bombay is now a serried array of four- and five-storeyed flats; where the Jackal Club had

its cold-weather camp in the adjacent island of Salsette are new colonies of middle-class dwellers. The expansion of the cities is phenomenal. The great wen of Calcutta, with the integral suburb of Howrah, now numbers more than four millions of people; Bombay, crowded with a population of a million and a quarter, has more than two millions within the civic boundaries, and there has not been a development of building proportionate to this growth.

Bungalow life, save in the mofussil, has disappeared. It began in Western India when plague broke out; most of the fine houses on Malabar and Cumballa Hills were owned by Indians, who dwelt in their ancestral halls in the bazaars, with a density of population almost beyond belief, and here, of course, the pestilence had its firmest hold. Naturally the property owners moved into the more hygienic areas; and though Government preserved a few for the housing of its own officials, these hills ceased to be European quarters. The spreading bungalow, with its thick roofing of country tiles, wide verandahs and pleasant gardens, is wellnigh extinct; the flat, which made its first appearance at the turn of the century, is universal; and good as many of these blocks are, comparing not unfavourably with the West End of London, flats they are and that is not the same thing.

The rise in the cost of living! This is startling. Harking back to the days when £20 a month was the usual starting wage of the Briton, the inflationary period which began with the close of the First World War swelled expenses to very high levels. By the time the 'twenties had well set in heads of firms found that the sterling cost of an assistant was not less than £75 a month, if wages, passages, medical attendance, housing allowance and provident fund were taken into account. The tax-collector became more and more exigent, and today super-tax is steeper than in Britain, and there is that sinister feature in the big cities which has its parallel in other places—the most imposing buildings are the headquarters of the tax-collector. I have taken counsel with an experienced housewife who, to use an old-fashioned term, kept a good table, but wasted nothing, as to the household expenses in the mid-forties for herself, husband and three children;

they amounted to just short of £120 a month; nor has the inflationary spiral stopped at that point. But at the risk of bringing on my head the wrath of the harassed British matron, this should be added:

"Amid so many changes one thing has not altered—the silent, efficient, reliable service of the good Indian domestic. The washerman still turns up, wet or fine, with his huge bundle of beautifully laundered linen balanced on the top of his head and with the memsahib's dresses borne on hangers in his hand. The butler still takes charge of the running of the house with the supervision of the lady of the establishment, and keeps the staff in good running order. The cook and the mate manage the kitchen and turn out a dinner for four extra people at an hour's notice. The sewing man comes when needed, and, given the material and a sketch of the garment required, returns it neatly finished in a few days. Of course, there are gaps in this service. Each member of the domestic staff has his bit of land in his village, or some definite attachment to the soil, and periodically retires to his home for marriage or other ceremony and returns in his own good time, but he generally finds a substitute who carries on." The traditional links which bound master and man have weakened little and remain one of the happiest memories of life in the East.

If this is one side of the account, there are big entries *per contra*. The amenities of life have vastly improved. Foremost was the coming of electricity.

It is hard to recall the days when the filling and trimming of the lamps were almost the whole-time duty of at least one domestic, and heat and smoke added to the trials of the hot days. It seems like another world to bring to memory hours spent in dak bungalows during the fiery hours of May in Central or Northern India striving to keep the sweat drops off the sheets of paper whilst recording impressions of famine conditions in the stark years of the great drought.

There are not many alive today who know what a therm-antidote was—the screen of aromatic khus-khus grass put up on the windward side of the bungalow, doused with water from hour to hour, cooling the heated winds as they swept

over the parched plains and into the house. A touch of the switch and the electric fan does its work; no longer do the weary punkah coolies keep the swish-swish cloth barely moving, only to stop from sleep in the hottest hour of the night. This may seem a small thing, but it is not. Bless the chemists who invented the fine petroleum spray marketed for dealing with flies and other insects. One of the banes of the East is the ant and his rival the mosquito. The havoc that can be wrought by the ant, white or black, must be seen to be believed; it was not uncommon in the warehouse of *The Times of India* on moving one of the great reels of newsprint, seeming solid enough when viewed from outside, to see it just disintegrate into dust because it was riddled with white ants. I have known dwellers on Malabar Hill forced to dine with their trousers tucked into top-boots against a plague of mosquitoes. The ant hates petroleum like poison; a whiff of it and he gives up the ghost. The wily mosquito lurks under chair and sofa during the hours of daylight and emerges at sundown to pursue his fell work, irritating beyond endurance even when he does not carry the pernicious germ of malaria. At sundown the houseman pursues him to his lair armed with the spray gun and P-H-U-T, he is done for!

Untold generations have learnt of the plagues of Egypt without the faintest conception of what a plague of flies or of boils can be. Put down in any small Indian town after the rains are over and the dreadful significance of that visitation comes home. There is quick in my memory a call on American missionaries living in the heart of the Indian quarter of a small town in Gujarat one September day; there were plates of arsenical fly-paper all around the room, and the houseman came every hour to sweep up the myriad of corpses from the floor. And of the Assistant Collector who was found struggling with his paper-work, squatting on his bed with the mosquito curtains firmly drawn; if he attempted to write in the open the inkpot was a mass of flies as soon as the lid was raised. If there is gratitude in man he will raise high a statue to those who harnessed petroleum to the service of the dweller in the East.

"Restless is invention," Cowper sang in "The Task." The

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later developments seem like heaping the luxury of Pelion on the Ossa of comfort. Happy was the day when the Americans sent the electric refrigerator to expel the ice-box. Morning and evening the coolie was sent forth for the household supply of ice, which came smothered in dirty sawdust and always gave out before it was renewed. The freshly killed meat or poultry which was carried in smelly vans from the slaughter-houses to the market had to be half-roasted in the afternoon or it was odorous by dinner-time. Now, tucked away in the refrigerator, it can recover itself before passing to the oven, and the daily visit of the cook to the bazaar has been reduced to three days a week. The refrigerator has more than paid for its cost by the avoidance of waste. And then the climax of the air-conditioned room!

What a boon it is to sit and work with an even temperature of, say, 75 degrees, with the air changed every few minutes. If this was the experience of Bombay, what must the blessing be in the torrid heat of Central and Northern India, when the temperature soars to 110 or higher.

Travel! It would be good for the sybarites who take the air-conditioned train to the North or the East, with every facility provided, to experience for once the conditions of the early years of the century, to take for instance the Mail at Karachi for Lahore or Delhi. True, he might have one of the roomy box compartments to himself and his luggage, or at the most only one fellow traveller. There he would find fitted into one of the window frames a circular fan of khus-khus grass, with a handle to grind it round and a shallow pan of water to keep it moist. Diligent work on the handle would—or might—thoroughly wet the grass and for a few blessed moments the air be clean and cool; but the grass dried with dreadful speed and the water was exhausted long before the day ended. Everyone carried his own bedding in a huge hold-all—the cotton quilt, the country blanket and sheets. The test whether it was really hot, or only pretending to be hot, was whether the sheet was burning to the hand when spread for the night. The sand blew in from the Sind desert, piled on the bed-clothes and lay thick on the floor. For those of apoplectic habit there was only one secure protection from

heat stroke, and that was an ice bag at the back of the neck. No wise man or woman trusted to local supplies of water or milk, for disease lurked therein; he moved with his own supplies of soda-water and tinned milk. All very primitive; but nobody grumbled; it was all part of the day's work.

All this is "small beer," but is it not true to say that there is an abiding interest in learning how ordinary folk live and work? At a representative London gathering of newspaper men an American journalist who had taken charge of the great Associated Press Agency told his audience that one of his purposes was to interest his clients in the Middle West in Europe and its affairs. "I am not going to tell them," he went on to say, "of kings and statesmen, of politics and economics, but just what Jacques Bonhomme, Hans Pfleiderer and Ivan Ivanov are thinking and doing."

Putting the "small beer" aside for the moment, and thinking on bigger things, there is no more striking change in India than the emergence of women into society and public service. Here it is necessary to be cautious or a false impression will be created. Often is heard the voice which professes to speak of India.

No man knows India or ever will. Perhaps the high-up ones in the sacred arcana of the central government can take a more detached view than others, but when pundits lay down the law on Indian affairs they are really reflecting conditions in the part of India where they served. In race, language, social customs, except in so far as a common knowledge of English has levelled barriers, Bombay is as different from Bengal and the Punjab from Madras as Britain from Eastern Europe. In the emancipation of women from the zenana and the purdah Western India was in the van. This sprang from the influence of the Parsis. No small minority—and the Parsis were never a hundred thousand strong, half of them settled in Western India—has ever exercised a greater influence. Free from caste, with no inhibition against crossing the Black Water, they were the pioneers in opening up the profitable Chinese market; restlessly enterprising, with the stimulus of being a drop in the ocean of the Indian mass, they laid the foundations of the cotton textile industry, and when

wider fields opened founded the iron and steel works and major manufactures.

At every district headquarters the Parsi kept the general store, often with a small hotel attached—and what stores they were! As Christmas approached an English lady marched into one of these Indian Whiteleys and said: “Jamsetji, I want some candied peel.” Jamsetji thought awhile and replied: “Nay, Memsahib, I’m very sorry. I Beecham peel have and Cockley peel, but no candy peel.”

The Tatas, the Wadias, the Jeejibhoys—these families have impressed their names on the economy of the land. But in no respect was their influence more beneficial than in breaking down the barriers that segregated Hindu and Mahomedan women. Strictly monogamous, they set an example to a polygamous society and were a standing inspiration to women chafing behind the purdah. The leaven was long at work. Forgotten perhaps are the early activities of The National Indian Association, but long before the turn of the century it was bringing together women of all communities. Foremost in this were the Parsis inspired by Lady Cowasji Jehangier, with her active lieutenant, Miss Sirinbhai Cursetji. Mrs. Flora Sassoon added the driving force of her community; after the early death of her husband she carried on the business of her house, and the bold signature of Flora Sassoon was familiar to every banker and merchant office. A devoted band of English ladies joined the ranks. It was a fascinating experience to watch the working of the leaven. For many of the early years at the drawing-room meetings there was the purdah screen and the lively chatter behind it; the purdah was little more than nominal, for bright eyes constantly peeped round the folds.

When the Willingdon Sports Club was started towards the end of the First World War there was a special purdah pavilion; fortunately, it was burnt down and never rebuilt; the Indian ladies found it was much more fun to join the general company on the lawns and terraces. The great drive came with the war. Lady Willingdon marshalled the women of the Presidency in service for the tendance of the sick and suffering and there was work enough for them to do and more

during the temporary breakdown in Mesopotamia, and splendidly it was done. After that exhilarating experience there could be no looking back and the women of India went forward with giant strides. Yet within living memory the first Parsi to appear in public with his wife walking by his side, instead of meekly following in his footsteps, was wont to tell of the obloquy which fell upon him from the orthodox. Unless republican India is ungrateful—and India is rarely ungrateful—never should these pioneers be forgotten; the women Ministers of today are the fruit of those who braved public opinion and blazed the trail three-quarters of a century ago.

In one important respect the social organization lagged.

Clubs; what was the influence of a highly organized club life on the political and social consciousness of India? That question does not admit of easy answer, though certain aspects are patent. The racial exclusiveness of all the leading European clubs was unjustified and harmful. It shut off Britons from the strengthening currents of political thought and isolated them from warm contacts with the intelligentsia of the land, breeding an isolation and unwarranted sense of superiority prejudicial to an enduring partnership between the two countries. It inspired amongst educated Indians a resentment quite natural in the circumstances and leaving a bitter taste in the mouth; it was possible for the Briton to spend the greater part of his life in India and never meet a cultured Indian save in the way of business or official work. How it narrowed what should have been the joyous friendships and contacts of a new life in a new country when the word "exile" was nonsense, and how it converted what should have been rich formative years to a glorified suburban—and not very glorified—society under eastern skies! Nothing impressed thoughtful visitors more unfavourably than this racial exclusiveness, but the protests they made from time to time passed unnoticed, where they did not arouse exasperation.

Yet that is not the whole picture. What do we mean by a club in the British sense of the term? Surely an association of men and women with kindred ideas, and a common way of life, for their convenience and enjoyment. Could that be fully translated in a land where the purdah and the zenana



ruled, though their force was in the big cities diminishing; where caste prevailed, inter-dining was prohibited, and in extreme cases the touch of the European was defilement? Exclusiveness was not limited to the British community. The Parsis had their own clubs; the Hindus and Mahomedans their own gymkhanas; it was not unnatural for the Briton to ask that he should have a place where at the end of a tiring day in a sub-tropical climate he could meet his own folk and those of his own way of life. When full allowance is made for these special conditions it remains that the racial exclusiveness of the British clubs was a running sore; like many another whose whole interests were in India, it was a humiliation to me to have to leave an Indian friend—possibly a member of "The Athenacum," "The Carlton" or "The St. James's"—at the entrance to a British club, because he was inadmissible even as a guest. Moreover, whatever might be said of other parts of India, the barrier was unjustified in Bombay, where the Parsis lived in British fashion and were free from caste restrictions, and where many Mahomedans and socially advanced Hindus shared our customs. The practice of excluding Indian guests was substantially abandoned at the end of the Second World War; like many another British movement, it came too late and too reluctantly.

So far as Bombay was concerned, the matter came to a head with the arrival of Lord Willingdon. Soon after he took office he asked me to visit him at Mahableswhar and opened his heart. "I have come here," he said, "with a direct mandate from the King and the Secretary of State to break down this damning racial exclusiveness; advise me how to set about it." Perhaps the answer was discouraging. "Do you want the pleasant answer or the harsh truth?" Of course, he replied that he wanted the truth, so I went on to warn him to leave it alone. "You must bear in mind that a club is a complete democracy. Those who formed the club are fully justified in deciding who should be members. You and I and others deplore this racial isolation. We are not warranted in forcing our views on those who differ from us. More important still, we have not the power; whatever we think, Jones, Brown and Robinson may not only think differently, but have exactly the

same means of making their opinions good, namely, one vote at a club meeting. Leave it alone; you will stir up a lot of mud and have to admit defeat." Willingdon went on to say he could not leave it alone; his instructions were mandatory, but he lent a ready ear when an alternative was suggested; it was that he should form a club for all communities, so good, so rich in amenities that everyone would want to join it and use it; the mixed clubs in Calcutta and Bombay, good in themselves, did not make a universal appeal. That was the genesis of The Willingdon Sports Club.

The idea was not entirely new. Lord Northcote cast his eye over a big expanse of waste-land on the outskirts of the residential area and made tentative proposals for a sports club, but the project lapsed with his premature retirement. Here were eighteen acres of derelict land, the site of the original Great Breach through which the tide swept until it was closed, to the vast improvement of the health of the community, by the Hornby Vellard. For nearly a century the town refuse was dumped on the swamp, raising it to road level. This was permanently scheduled as an open space; a temporary lease was obtained from the Improvement Trust.

So the work went on. Willingdon threw himself into it heart and soul; many an evening we paced the terraced lawn planning and scheming; British residents subscribed handsomely, but it was the generosity of the Indian Princes which made realization possible. They contributed not less than £25,000, in non-interest-bearing irredeemable debentures, and asked no more than life membership. The polo ground was levelled and turfed; the cricket field smoothed; half a dozen tennis courts provided; a nine-hole golf-course laid out, with an adequate pavilion euphemistically classed as "temporary" to keep within the law; and the club was opened in November of 1917. It never looked back. Polo died a natural death with rising costs; cricket never took hold, because of the attractions of the older clubs; but golf became the mainstay, and Indians, men and women, took to it like ducks to water. We laid down the principle that the best was only just good enough; "The Willingdon" became a synonym for the best in sport, in food, for every social amenity; the club sore was healed, and when

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"The Byculla" and the Yacht Clubs opened their doors to Indian guests the need had really passed.

In another field the social ferment has worked to produce a problem of staggering magnitude. Nothing is more remarkable than the conquest, or if the word conquest is too strong, the mitigation of tropical disease. Those who went forth to India in the 'nineties were prepared to face certain risks. Plague raged with terrific violence towards the end of the century, but it scarcely touched Europeans; it was much later that it was learnt that this did not arise from any immunity in themselves, but, as the source of infection was the rat flea, those who wore shoes escaped. Smallpox was endemic, but there was always the security of frequent vaccination. Typhoid fever, abscess of the liver, malaria—hardly a month passed without some friend being stricken down.

The griffin faced all these risks with equanimity; what he did not anticipate was a cold in the head, and he arose in mild surprise when he suffered the worst rheum he had dreamt of. There is not one of these diseases which has not been brought under control by the scientist and the doctor. What none anticipated, and what is little appreciated even now, is the tremendous impact on the whole social structure of the Indian peoples.

The census of India is taken every ten years. The figures are so startling that they are almost unbelievable.

### COMPARISON BETWEEN THE FIGURES OF THE TOTAL POPULATION OF INDIA IN 1941 AND THOSE OF EARLIER CENSUSES

<i>Census of</i>	<i>Population (ooo's)</i>			<i>Total Increase</i>	
	<i>All-India</i>	<i>British India</i>	<i>States and Agencies</i>	<i>ooo's</i>	<i>Per Cent</i>
1891	279,446	212,971	66,476	29,321	11.8
1901	283,872	220,605	63,267	4,226	1.2
1911	303,013	231,604	71,409	19,140	6.7
1921	305,693	233,561	72,132	2,680	0.9
1931	338,119	256,758	81,361	32,426	10.6
1941	388,998	295,809	93,189	50,879	15.0

A glance at this table shows that between 1891 and 1921 the population increased at a very modest ratio. The reason is writ in the history of those years. This was a period of famine; the rains failed in 1896 and even more lamentably in 1899. The Government accepted the responsibility of saving human life, and the Indian States joined in the work; the actual deaths from hunger were placed at about a million. But what no government could entirely control was the fearful sweep of cholera in the relief camps, and the toll of malaria on frames weakened by privation when the rains came. Plague baffled all remedial measures save the partial remedy of evacuation until Haffkine's prophylactic proved its efficacy. On top of these misfortunes was the devastating epidemic of influenza in 1918, which caused twelve million deaths.

Contrast these scenes. At the little city of Udaipur, the capital of the Indian State of Mewar, in the hot weather of 1900, the deaths from cholera were four hundred a day; the bulk of the inhabitants drew their water from one contaminated source. In the same month, at Godhra in the Panch Mahals of the Bombay Presidency, fifteen hundred men and women on one relief work perished from cholera in three days, and the dead were borne to the burning-ground in cart-loads. Knowing these things, how intense was the anxiety when the migrations following Partition numbered over ten millions lest cholera should smite them hip and thigh with results none could contemplate without dismay. Loss of life there has been, but no epidemic; prophylactic and a better knowledge of sanitation preserved the pilgrims from appalling losses. But look at the major problem the progress of science and the development of medical knowledge have brought in their train!

Everyone knows that the standard of life in India is far too low. The energetic purpose of the Independent Governments is to raise it. What a task! Passing from the general to the particular, the giant irrigation works harnessing the Indus in Sind brought under cultivation an area as large as the irrigated lands of Egypt. What contribution does it make to the feeding of India? Does it support a million, or two millions? That is less than half the estimated annual increase.

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It is claimed that the food supply of India has improved by a million tons a year since Independence Day. If the accepted standards are sound, and a satisfactory diet is a pound of grain, or its equivalent, a head a day, then that meets the needs of, say, three and a half millions of the annual growth of five millions. Truly it is a problem to stagger humanity.

The remedy? That lies in Indian hands, and perhaps it is an impertinence to dwell upon them. Yet certain facts stare us in the face. Nothing would contribute more to the economic stability of India than the recovery of the productivity of Burma. In the years before Burma was racked by civil strife the average imports of rice by India were nearly two million tons; in time of scarcity the figure rose to two and a half millions. The trickle from Burma has declined to less than one-fourth of that figure. India is thrown back on her own resources and their development lies so deep in Indian religion and custom that only Indians can speak of it. Much may be done by irrigation and the field is immense. There are twenty-three river projects in hand or under investigation, and these are to add 2.7 million tons to the food supply. These will take many years to complete and employ vast capital, whilst the population moves on with the irresistible force of a glacier. The great chemical works at Sindri will materially supplement the supply of artificial manure. But if and when all these resources are developed there remains the great stumbling-block—the Hindu law of inheritance, which splits holdings uneconomic in themselves into tiny scattered fragments; without the consolidation of holdings an improved agriculture is an idle dream.

More than a quarter of a century ago an Indian economist of repute averred that by the mere consolidation of holdings the productivity of the *ryotwari* tracts in the Deccan could be doubled without demanding more capital or labour. To the Hindu, for religious and historic reasons, the cow is a sacred animal; slaughter is an abhorred thing. It is not for the non-Hindu to criticize or challenge that conviction, but its fruits have been revealed by the Agricultural Secretary, Mr. K. L. Panjabi: "Judged by modern standards half our 177 million cattle are unproductive; they cannot pay for their keep. At

the same time our charitable instincts come in the way of rational disposal of old and useless cattle. Charity, however, begins at home. If we ignore this and share our limited food supply with useless animals, we do so at our peril."

There is no more familiar and distressing sight in the countryside than the spectacle of the herds wending their way to the village towards sundown, picking up a mouthful of fodder from the parched land, little more than skin and bone, yet kept alive from tradition deep-rooted in religion. Often in the years preceding independence social reformers, fully appreciative of the value of the British connexion, would urge the importance of self-government, because only a national government could get at grips with social ills to which an alien administration, with its doctrine of neutrality, was bound to turn a blind eye. They have come home from economic forces, and if the seed-bed of communism is human misery those charged with the governance of India can demand, and should receive, the aid of all the free peoples in the task that lies before them.

The great *maidan* at Calcutta is fringed with statues in memory of the men who served India. Every provincial or State capital has its marble figures of Governors and of one Secretary of State, Edwin Montagu. Which of these distinguished men left the most enduring mark on the land? Warren Hastings is foremost; then Dalhousie; he laid broad and deep, by a sweeping series of reforms, the foundations of the administrative system, and its pattern for generations. Whether he was right in applying the doctrine of lapse to three of the Maratha States, in the conditions of the time, will always be a subject of controversy, but the solid character of his work is beyond criticism. Then, for his first five years, Curzon; the all-embracing character of his reforms, the dynamic energy with which he pursued them, formed no small part of the magnificent structure Britain bequeathed to Independent India. And third—though this will induce hot dispute—Lord Hardinge. What other man would so firmly have grasped the nettle of the partition of Bengal and have linked with its modification the move of the capital to Delhi? Though this did not originate with him, for the spadework

was done by the Home and Finance Members, Sir John Jenkins and Sir Guy Fleetwood Wilson, he took the project in his own strong hands and carried it to completion with the full assent of the Cabinet.

We have only to survey the field in India today to realize how impossible it would have been to develop the constitution of India to meet changes admittedly inevitable, if the capital had remained in Calcutta and Bengal a pale shadow of a Provincial or State administrative entity. For generations the idea of giving the Government of India an enclave of its own had been tossed from one bureau to another. Nasik in the Bombay Presidency, Jubbulpore in the Central Provinces had been toyed with, and Curzon gave passing thought to the selection of Agra, but blanched at the prospect of the uproar it would create amongst the privileged and powerful commercial community of Calcutta. What other man would, when he recovered consciousness from the grievous wounds inflicted by the bomb thrown on his state entry into Delhi, have proclaimed that his policy would not deviate a hair's breadth on account of the attempt on his life? But what endeared him to the peoples of India more than any other step was his bold declaration, what time India was sore at heart at the treatment of Indians in South Africa, that in their resentment "they have the sympathy of India—deep and burning and not only of India but of all those who, like myself, without being Indians themselves, have feelings of sympathy for the people of this country." That resolute identification of the Government with the people brought him to the verge of recall; but it made India feel that her honour and interests were as jealously regarded by the Viceroy as they could be by one of their own race; it made the Government of India the Indian Government. The sequel as recorded by Lord Hardinge in his memoirs is impressive; when this episode was recalled to the large-hearted General Botha during the Paris Peace Conference, Botha admitted that in similar circumstances he would have done the same but in stronger language. What other man, with the cares of the Frontier heavy upon him; the formidable Ghadr conspiracy brewing in the Punjab; the spectre of hundreds of disgruntled emigrants returning from the East;

would have pledged the last man and the last gun to the common cause and so generously fulfilled the promise that at one time no more than fifteen thousand troops were left in garrison? Take him all in all, Hardinge is sure of his place in this galaxy.

Strange are the forces which govern human affairs. But for a totally unexpected happening Hardinge would not have had his opportunity—in time. He was naturally ambitious to fill the post once occupied by his grandfather. For two years before the retirement of Lord Minto it was taken for granted that it would be offered to him; but when the hour approached King Edward imposed his embargo; he insisted on keeping Hardinge near him at the Foreign Office. Kitchener was pulling hard at every possible string, for he had set his heart on the office and had the strong backing of the King; he felt so sure that he even selected his staff, and sought to frighten Hardinge off by warning him that none could bear the expenses of the Viceroyalty without a private income of £8,000 a year.

The unexpected death of King Edward removed the only obstacle, and Hardinge entered on his work in the zenith of his powers. True, he might have attained his ambition five years later, but he would have been five years older, years enmeshed in the routine of the Foreign Office; he could not have been quite the same man. When he bade farewell to India at the Apollo Bunder, the Indian Princes—Bikaner, Scindia and Indore—were moved to streaming tears; the Indian politicians felt that they had lost a real friend. It is fitting that his statue should look out over that splendid harbour, on the seas which were furrowed with the keels of the great armadas which bore Indian reinforcements to all the theatres of war—seventy-one ships left in one convoy, fully equipped from Indian arsenals, crowded with trained Indian troops, which a few miles out split into three sections destined for East Africa, Egypt and Mesopotamia.



## THE WORKING OF THE FERMENTS

THE THIRST TO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND,  
A LARGE AND LIBERAL DISCONTENT:  
THESE ARE THE GOODS IN LIFE'S RICH HAND,  
THE THINGS THAT ARE MORE EXCELLENT

*William Watson*

WHEN THE FURORE over the partition of Bengal was at its height and sedition was again raising its ugly head in the Deccan, there blew into *The Times of India* office a bright young American who presented his card from *The New York Outlook*. He expressed surprise at a casual correspondent being received without introduction; but the motto of the office was always *char dwarza kolo*—the four doors open to all comers—and was at once reassured with the statement that any representative of “The Outlook,” then at the height of its influence, with Roosevelt amongst its contributors, would always be welcome. He started with the wide general inquiry, so characteristic of the American, so often embarrassing to the questioned: “I want you to tell me all about the unrest in India.” Humph! A pretty poser on a busy afternoon. The easiest way out was the counter question: “What would be the verdict on the British connexion with India if there were no unrest? Would it not be that we had stifled all human ambitions and clamped down on the dawning nationality of India the dead hand of repression?” Surveying the Indian scene then, and throughout the passage of successive reforms through Parliament, it often seemed as if the British people were in the state of mind of the man who, having planted the grain of mustard seed, was astounded at the growth of the mighty tree that rose therefrom.

The policy of *The Times of India* which I inherited when I became responsible for its editorial control in 1907 was

statical, which the dictionary defines as acting by mere weight without producing motion. It was well described by my predecessor, when asked by Sir Halford Mackinder his views on the future of India: "I think of the Government going on very much as at present." "But don't forget," was Mackinder's reply, "that human society is not static; it is dynamic." It was often a matter of criticism that no one could edit an English newspaper in India and have a policy. On the contrary—as the French traveller said when asked, on landing at Dover after a rough crossing, if he had dined—how was it possible to edit any journal and not have a policy? So counsel was taken with friends in every grade of society—with the senior members of the Indian Civil Service in high executive posts; with the rising body of Indian politicians; with the social reformers; and with the leading members of the commercial community, though these for the most part were busied with their own affairs and aloof from the political scene. From one and all came the same answer—of course, the destiny of the Indian Empire is full self-government, call it what you will; but from too many with the qualification that it must come suddenly, and until the day arrived British authority must be maintained unimpaired. Now that did not seem to make sense; surely the difference between the politician and the statesman is that the latter looks straight ahead, prepares for the inevitable, and adjusts his measures to that end. So it did not need much intelligence to arrive at the conclusion that if these counsellors were right, the path was plain—so to adapt the constitution that when the hour of Independence struck, the final transition would be made without weakening the foundations of law and order whose preservation was the common interest of all, Briton and Indian alike.

There were prickly hedges in the path. The concentration of authority in the Executive Councils, dominated by members of the Indian Civil Service, induced the confusion between policy and administration to which reference has already been made. This was intensified by another influence: these were men in the autumn of their days, looking towards their proximate retirement and with no permanent stake in the country. How natural it was for them to take refuge in the

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excuse for inaction that "it will last my time and after me—well, if not the deluge, that is someone else's affair." Then there were lost to India often in the prime of life—twenty-five years' service in the country qualified for full pension in the Civil Service—the experienced men who should have played a valuable part in the political life of the country. Almost without exception they retired to Britain, and there in the groves of Cheltenham, Bath and Tunbridge Wells shook their heads at every change and murmured: "These things did not happen when I was in Dustypore, sir, a quarter of a century ago." Then there was Parliament, too largely dominated by British industrial and commercial interests, jealous, intensely jealous, of any political developments which might seem to impinge on their privileged position.

My travels in India during the two great famines, and direct contact with the devastating effect of a failure of the rains, to which all parts of the country were liable, brought home the conviction that, whilst an efficient administration might mitigate the shock of a poor monsoon, the only permanent cure was a development of industry which would lighten the dependence of the community on the uncertain produce of the soil. This was reinforced by experience. On no part of India did the catastrophe of the famine of 1899-1900 fall with greater severity than on Gujarat. This rich area was often called the Garden of India; there were good seasons and seasons which were not so good; but not in the memory of man a year when the land scarcely produced a blade of grass. The stunned ryots clung to their villages, and had to be carried to centres where they could be fed; they nursed their splendid draught bullocks at every sacrifice. The loss of life from hunger was appalling, and cholera came to swell the mortality. Even when the rains came malaria swept away thousands who had managed to survive but with bodies weakened by semi-starvation. Ten years later there was another failure of the rains, but in the interval a considerable expansion of industry in Ahmedabad, Broach and Surat provided alternative means of livelihood and circulating money.

A tour through the districts which were struck down in

the earlier famine showed that the economy had been so strengthened by the diffusion of industry that there was little need for government relief works. It was not a question therefore of searching for a policy; it naturally arose out of any objective study of the Indian scene. That policy was a discriminating support of those political movements which reflected the natural growth of nationhood and their direction into constitutional developments which would lead to the inevitable goal of full responsible government. Linked with this a wise encouragement of manufacturing industry, so adjusted that it did not impose an undue charge on a predominantly agricultural community. That again was incompatible with a fiscal practice of free imports, dictated from Whitehall, and even the modest revenue tariff scarred by the excise duty on textiles.

What was the great dynamic force to which Mackinder so wisely directed attention? The English language. It is beating the air now to resurrect the fierce controversy which raged in the 'thirties of the last century over the medium of higher education in India; we are concerned with results, not causes. It is, however, germane to recall that the driving force behind Macaulay's minute, which settled the question for well over a century, was not that very cocksure gentleman himself, but Keshub Chunder Sen, the first of the social reformers, who looked to English as the means of pruning Hinduism of the accretions that had fastened upon it, and Carey, the Baptist missionary, who saw in the diffusion of English the means to spread Christianity: Macaulay was the mouthpiece, not the originator.

It is impossible to exaggerate the influence of English on the growth of Indian political thought. It gave the expanding educated community a common medium of expression. The university graduate of Bengal talked freely with the Maratha; the Punjabi with the folk whose mother tongue was the intractable Dravidian vernaculars Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam. It unlocked for the educated Indian the culture of the world, for there is not a work of importance produced in any country which is not translated into English; it converted him from a provincial into a citizen of the world.

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Without higher education in English no Indian nationhood could have grown.

One or two instances will illustrate the point. In the early 'twenties Rabindranath Tagore delivered to a crowded audience in the Convocation Hall of Bombay University an address on education, in which he poured scorn on any education save in the vernacular. On the following morning we were breakfasting together, and in the course of conversation he asked my opinion of the lecture. After the usual compliments, I addressed this question to him: "Do you appreciate that if your ideas had been carried out, not a dozen in that audience would have understood a sentence of your oration?" Bengali is a foreign tongue in Western India. At the Amraoti session of the Indian National Congress, in 1897, a delegate from the north was howled down because he spoke in Urdu, a language not understood by his fellows. Of course there were paradoxes. In later years, when explaining to a conference of the Girls' Diocesan Society the growth of Indian nationalism, a very intelligent lady asked the pertinent question, how I reconciled the growth of nationality with higher education in English. There was only one reply—I could not reconcile it, but could roundly assert that there would be no Indian nationality without higher education in English.

Everyone must sympathize with the Indian student who had to add to his labours, when passing from the vernacular primary schools to the Anglo-vernacular and then take his degree in English. My heart has often ached for the not-too-bright student who had to wrestle with Shelley's "Ode to a Skylark," and for the science student invited to dissect an earth-worm or a weed common in England which did not exist in India; but Indian friends have given the assurance that with a competent tutor, who could readily switch from the vernacular to English, the labour is not as great as it seems. If the toil is great, the reward is rich; what would we not give personally if roaming through the whole of Europe without Russia we found that every educated man we met spoke a common tongue? Not the least of the puzzles we have set the Independent Indian Republic is the ultimate place of English

in education and administration, and that is sensibly left to natural development. And, though this is anticipating, have we not seen Pandit Nehru forced to repudiate a misrepresentation of a speech made at Jamshedpur because as it was spoken in Hindi it was not understood? If our sympathies go out to the strain on the Indian student of today, what of those of the next generation in, say, South India, who in addition to his native Telugu must master Hindi to meet nationalist ambitions, and then English to make himself understood abroad and to find the key to the literature of the world?

So much lies on the surface; deeper forces were at work. The most selfless worker in the social field in my day was one whose name is not familiar, Kamesh Natarajan. His whole life was devoted, at great personal sacrifice and without hope of reward, to the task of social reform. He burst into the office full of indignation, and when asked what ailed him railed at a proposal in one of the colleges in an Indian State to reduce the attention given to the study of English. "You don't know," he explained, "what English means to us; it is far more than a *lingua franca*; it brings with it a whole new ethical concept." That was an unexpected outburst from an Indian nationalist; but India was always so full of surprises that the power of astonishment was dulled.

Of all the fables industriously circulated (especially by emotional American journalists, not quite certain, like Quiller Couch, whether Bombay was in the Bay of Bengal or the Arabian Sea), the most fantastic was that the impulse to freedom began with Mr. Gandhi and was consummated by him on Independence Day. The foundations of liberty in the caste-ridden land were laid long before Mr. Gandhi was born; they were the work of men now forgotten but who deserved well of their country. These pioneers were the early products of the new universities, and, if hard things are sometimes said of British rule, never let it be overlooked that in the dark days of the 'fifties they established the instruments for the propagation of the new learning. Remarkable personalities they were, carrying into public life the inspiration of able teachers, imbued with the missionary spirit, and able with the small classes which were then the rule to instil British ideas of

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liberty into their pupils. Surendranath Bannerji, W. C. Bonnerji and Bhupendranath Basu in Bengal, Pherozechah Mehta in Bombay and Sankaran Nair and Srinivasa Sastri in Madras—these were the fathers of Indian freedom. Their mastery of the English tongue was superb.

The first session of the Indian National Congress I attended was at Amraoti in the Berars in 1897, and this was after years of experience of public speakers in Britain. But when Surendranath Bannerji mounted the platform, and for an hour, without a note, expounded the hopes and aspirations of educated India in faultless Augustan English, then there was only one impression—this was platform oratory at its zenith. Pherozechah Mehta was more robust and he had drunk deep of the Victorian poets; Sastri in a class by himself. Gifted with a noble presence and a silver voice, he raised high the tone of every discussion; this was the Sastri who after a tour of the world electrified a sun-dried audience at Simla with this confession of faith—the British Commonwealth is the greatest instrument for human freedom the world has ever seen. Of all this galaxy of distinguished men my heart went out to Pherozechah Mehta, perhaps because for many years I was in closest contact with him.

Pherozechah was perhaps the first Indian nationalist. Often and often he declared that he was an Indian first and a Parsi afterwards. As a lawyer he soon built up a lucrative practice in Bombay and the mofussil; at one time he thought of competing for the Civil Service, but put the idea behind him for a life of public service. His first and continuing love was for the city of Bombay, and year in year out he was to be found in his seat on the right of the President shaping the course of the Municipal Corporation; and in the senate of the Bombay University. He possessed a remarkable flair for politics with an acute perception of the time to stand fast and the occasion to give way. He gathered round him a strong team. There was Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, with a clear-cut mind and logical approach to every question; Sir Dinsha Wacha, the acid scribe and the kindest man who ever flayed an opponent; and Sir Ibrahim Rahimtulla, a Mahomedan Khoja, the shrewdest man in public life in my time.

Over this group Pherozeshah maintained his supremacy to the end, without patronage, without hope of office himself, by the sheer force of his character and *sens de la politique*. He made one brief excursion into the Central Legislative Council, but his home was not there and he delegated that work to his disciple, G. K. Gokhale, a younger man of rare attainments. The mantle fell on worthy shoulders. Gokhale, with an easy command of limpid English and a statesmanlike cast of mind, was for at least two decades the expressive force of Indian nationalism; he could talk a common language with British ministers, especially with those of the liberal school, and markedly influenced the course of the Morley-Minto reforms. Looking ahead he saw the need of a continuing corps of selfless workers and founded The Servants of India Society, modelled on the practice of Ignatius Loyola, and brought into it a band of devoted men of whom Sastri was the chief; but the rules of the society were perhaps too severe to survive his death.

With all his admirable qualities Gokhale was not a strong man in the sense of the robust Pherozeshah Mehta; he was a little inclined in time of difficulty to throw up his hands with a sense of despair. This group of publicists gave a sanity to Bombay opinion which was long a stabilizing influence in Indian politics. It was a commonplace when agitation was tending to boil over to look to Bombay for a sober lead. This is more than a coincidence; in later years, when Lord Hardinge was reviled for his part in the transference of the seat of government from Calcutta to Delhi, he was wont to turn to his closest associates and say: "Never mind. We shall get justice from Bombay." When these strengthening currents of liberal thought were mobilized in the Indian National Congress in 1878—under the suggestion of a Briton, David Hume, be it remembered—this dual purpose was attained—a policy, self-government for India, and a vehicle for its propagation, the Indian National Congress.

The annual sessions of the Congress were political feasts. The President for the year was carried in procession through immense cheering crowds, he delivered a tremendous opening address: academic resolutions were carried demanding simultaneous examinations for the Civil Service, the reduction of



military expenditure, the fairer adjustment of costs between the British and Indian Governments, and the development of self-governing institutions, and so forth. Then it went into cold storage for another year, save perhaps for a passing revival of activity if some burning question fanned the political embers. The Congress was essentially a constitutional body, guided by men who drew their inspiration from Gladstonian liberalism. Most of the reforms for which they pressed were adopted before independence; but the process of change was so slow that they had lost their political value and had little influence on the Indian scene.

This constitutional movement had nothing in common with the machinations of that bird of ill-omen, Bal Gangadher Tilak, in the Deccan. Tilak was a Brahmin of the Brahmins, a Chitpavan, a small fair community often represented as carrying the blood of sailors shipwrecked on the western coast. Tilak was a fisher in troubled waters. He seized on every topic of prejudice to fan the flames of hostility to the Government. Coming into notoriety by his opposition to the raising of the age of consent to the low limit of twelve years, and then exacerbating the resentment aroused by the necessary domiciliary visits in the anti-plague measures, he was the bitter and unrelenting enemy of the British connexion. If he had any other purpose than to make orderly government impossible, mainly through bringing the administration to a standstill by a boycott of Government service, it was not discernible; the malignance of his two campaigns was disclosed by Sir Valentine Chirol in a series of powerful articles in *The Times*, afterwards expanded in a masterly book on *The Unrest in India*. At the back of his mind was certainly the hope of reviving the Brahminical supremacy of the days of the Peishwas; he could not forget the days when Chitpavans were the masters of Maharashtra, so arrogant in their dominance that when the British forces were moving for the assault on Poona, their capital, it was proposed to hang their sacred cloths over the walls, when the infidels would not dare to attack them.

His instruments were twofold—a newspaper in English, the scholarly *Mahratta*, and a vernacular journal, *The Kesari*,

with a wide circulation for those days. His theme was the glorification of the palmy days of the Mahrathas under that daring leader, Sivaji, and his eulogy of Sivaji's murder of the emissary of the distant Moghuls, Afzul Khan. The first fruits of this campaign were the murder of the District Magistrate of Poona, the head of the organization to combat plague, as he was returning from Government House, a revival of the doctrine "Killing No Murder" which was for years to exercise its baleful influence on Indian politics. When he was brought to trial for sedition in 1897, and long extracts translated from *The Kesari* were read from the indictment, listeners wondered how these dull maunderings could have so disturbing an effect; but students of Marathi explained that they lost everything in translation and in the vernacular were pithy and well adapted to the conversion of ordinary people.

Tilak was quite unrepentant; as soon as he was free the campaign was renewed, and ten years later he was sentenced by a Parsi judge to a long term of imprisonment. He spent those years in the writing of a book on *The Arctic Home of the Vedas*, which attracted no little attention from those who did not read it, or if they read did not understand it; but it had no historical foundation. Thereafter his influence waned; the minds of men turned to more constructive fields; and as long as Pherozeshah Mehta lived he dared not put his nose into Bombay. Still, the last days were tremendously impressive. Approached in the autumn of his life for a further lead, he plaintively answered that his influence had gone. But when he died, at a modest lodging in Bombay city, the mourning was an amazing demonstration. The large Mahratha population surged forth in uncontrollable numbers; permission was given for the burning of his remains on the foreshore at Chaupatti, and, borne thither on the back of an elephant, were consigned to the flames in the presence of a myriad of grieving folk. This was in the rainy season. It was a wet, lowering sky, and as I passed through the seemingly endless procession at the close of the day's work and then looked down from the high ground of Malabar Hill on the tens of thousands who had gathered to pay him tribute, a passage in Meredith Townsend's suggestive work, *Europe and Asia*, arose

in my memory. It was that if ever the day came when British rule was no longer accepted, if the brown men struck for a week, the Empire would collapse like a house of cards and every ruling man would be a prisoner in his own house. He could not move or feed himself or get water. Only two things were remembered in that vast throng: 'Tilak had stood against alien domination, and had suffered for his faith. The age of consent had passed.

What converted the Indian National Congress from the other reflection of Indian aspirations into an organization tinged with violence? No single force, of course; human progress does not spring from single forces. There was the inevitable march of events; the immobility of the governing machine; the indifference of Parliament save when it thought British interests were affected; the sense of frustration—a word of which we were to hear so much; but undoubtedly the vigorous stirring of the dry bones under the dynamic personality of Lord Curzon, and in particular the partition of Bengal and the Universities Act. Even the most responsible of Indian politicians, like Gokhale, raged at Curzon's indifference to the political growth of India. He could not recognize that by his sweeping improvements in the administrative fabric, the development of her resources, and his stimulation of agriculture and industrial interests, Curzon was bequeathing to an India, ultimately bound to be independent, a vastly improved heritage.

This might have passed with no more than the stimulation of political activity if it had not been for two specific measures. The partition of Bengal, just and necessary as it was to split up an overgrown and under-administered province, was construed, rightly or wrongly, as an attack on the Bengal nation; it drove Surendranath Bannerji into violent opposition, and the vehemence of this agitation with its accompaniments of the boycott and burning of foreign cloth weakened the forces of law and order, and encouraged the gang robberies under arms, known as dacoities, always endemic in the isolated districts of Eastern Bengal. It would be useless to dogmatize on this if there were not confirmation from a source whose authenticity cannot be impugned.

In the 1911 revision of Sir John Strachey's standard work, *India: Its Administration and Progress*, Sir Thomas Holderness, an experienced member of the Civil Service, who afterwards had a long innings at the India Office, wrote: "It is unnecessary to speculate whether the requisite measure of relief could have been given to the administration of Bengal in some other way that might have provoked less agitation and unrest among the classes whose interests and feelings were affected. Nor is it necessary to inquire how far those interests were of a private or of a public order, how far those feelings were genuine or stimulated, or how far they had a rational basis or were the offspring of imagination and suspicion. The 'partition' of Bengal will long remain a landmark of social disorder, and the harbinger of an unhappy era of criminal acts and conspiracies against British rule."

Not that the agitation was without its humorous side. Surendranath burst into the office of the Viceroy's Private Secretary when the furore was at its height, wearing the coarse country cloth, so unsuited to the hot, damp climate of Calcutta, which was the symbol of the swadeshi movement, and passionately declared that he could not wear an English dhoti; it would burn into his skin. The Private Secretary, a cautious man, was silent for a while, and as the interview was closing remarked: "I am sorry to find, Surendranath, that you now have to wear spectacles. I see that the rims are gold, obviously of English make. Do they not burn into your eyes?" Surendranath, whose sense of humour was not strong, went silently away.

On the other side of India, Pherozeshah Mehta never forgave Curzon for the reform of the universities. Again none who gave the subject impartial thought could doubt that this too was wise and necessary; the miscellaneous debating societies called the University Senates were as ill fitted as could be to direct university studies along academic lines; the essence of the Curzon scheme was to bring university education under the control of educationists; if it never fully discharged this purpose that was due less to the defects of the Act than to the failure of the educationists to rise to their opportunities.

It was not so regarded by the politicians of the day. In the general atmosphere of suspicion it was widely believed this was part of a general attack on university education itself, with the concealed object of limiting the number of educated men, and so stifling the growth of political ambitions. This suspicion lingered after Curzon's resignation. When Lord Sydenham, as Governor of Bombay, advised the University to lighten an overloaded curriculum by jettisoning the course on history, Gokhale was brought into the Senate discussion to deliver a passionate protest against this denial of access to the sources of freedom. Being a member of the Senate at the time, I could not help suggesting to Gokhale that he was beating the air. How impossible it was to teach English without indoctrinating the student in ideas of freedom, seeing that English literature is instinct with the spirit of freedom; but this was unconvincing.

The turning-point in the history of the Indian National Congress was the session at Surat in 1907. Tilak brought to the Congress meeting a cohort of his satellites from the Deccan and the session broke up in disorder to adjourn *sine die*. In the turmoil a shoe was thrown at Pherozezshah, the greatest insult one Indian can inflict on another. The swan-song of the Congress, as conceived by Hume and its founders, was sung in 1916. The hour was critical; the session was to be held in Bombay. The first flush of enthusiastic support of the Empire in the war was waning and extremist forces were gathering strength. Everything depended on leadership. It was found in the person of Sir Satyendra Sinha, one of the most respected figures in Indian public life. In a powerful address ranging over the whole field of Indian politics he carried the Congress with him in continued support of the war and struck a new note. He asked for a goal and a policy. A goal and a policy—that was something new in Indian affairs.

In an oft-quoted passage in his *Expansion of England*, Sir John Seeley wrote that the acquisition of India was made blindly; nothing great that was ever done by Englishmen was done so unintentionally, so accidentally. Well, not so blindly after all; there was the continuing pursuit of trade, and the development of dominant British authority arose from the

essential need for a strong central power. It would be far truer to say that the growth of constitutional institutions was made blindly and that until Sinha pinned us down we had no clear idea where we were going and whither. Successive steps were taken leading straight to the establishment of self-government, but not one of those who were responsible for these steps visualized self-government at the end of the passage. The earliest Councils brought Indians into the fabric for the purpose of making laws and regulations. Their association induced a marked improvement in the form of legislation. The Cross Act of 1892 introduced the elective element and increased the powers of criticism. This was functioning when I arrived in India and it was a useful education to watch it at work. The sessions were formal. The Council met in solemn state at the headquarters of government in Bombay or Poona; there was the general discussion covering the events of the year; the Governor wound up with a disquisition on the policies of the administration; and then the members sat down to the serious business—law-making, for finance was excluded.

It would be a cardinal error to suppose that these bodies, though their functions were so limited, were without influence. Whilst immediate action was rare, the criticisms were often reflected in the plans for the ensuing year. Moreover, on occasion opposition could be effective, as is illustrated in this episode. The famine of 1899-1900 left the ryots of Bombay heavily in debt to the Government in the form of *takavi* advances and arrears of land revenue. Experienced revenue officers conceived the plan of tidying up the mess by wiping out these debts on the condition that the ryot accepted a restriction on his right to the transfer of his holding; this right of transfer was a fruitful factor in the accumulation of the huge total of agricultural debt. The scheme, beneficial in itself, aroused wide opposition from the moneyed interests, and vehement protests. When the Government stuck to their guns Pheroze Shah Mehta and his unofficial colleagues withdrew in protest from the Council, and, though there was much exaggeration in their contentions, they were basically right in insisting that the scheme fundamentally altered the land-revenue system, with its unrestricted right of transfer, by a

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side wind. Although the steam-roller of the official majority in the Council flattened out all opposition, the sequel was instructive; the Act became a dead letter and at the end of a year or two was quietly dropped. The Cross Act had another merit. The elected members were chosen by the local bodies—the Municipalities and the District Councils—and that brought into the deliberations men with experience of local government; it also raised the status of these bodies by making them an avenue to the Legislative Councils. One of the greatest blunders made later was the impatient discarding of the secondary electorates which were well suited to Indian conditions.

Every intelligent person recognized that the tremendous Liberal revival of 1906 and the advent of an academic radical like Morley to the India Office were bound to have reactions on the policy of India. It was no question of whether an advance should be made, but what and whither. We were left under no illusions as to what that step should be. Morley kept the direction of affairs in his own hands; he carried the Government of India under Lord Minto with him, but if responsibility is divided between these two authorities, it is on the principle of the pie-man whose horse-and-rabbit pies were fifty-fifty—one horse to one rabbit. Within their narrow scope the reforms were useful. The appointment brought Indian thought straight into the administration, previously the close monopoly of the Civil Service, and, with a Hindu and a Mahomedan in his Council, the Secretary of State had constant contact with Indian opinion. The expansion of the Councils and their increased powers of criticism and interpellation stimulated and gave direction to Indian political activity. But Morley made it clear beyond the possibility of doubt that he had not the remotest intention of relaxing the absolute control of Parliament through the Secretary of State over the governance of India.

The Viceroy and Governor-General, who in Curzon's view held the greatest office after the Crown, was the agent of Parliament. The members of the Executive Councils, though they loomed large in the eyes of the public, and though they drew large salaries—over four thousand pounds a year at the

then rate of exchange—were the minions of the Secretary of State. They were not permitted any independent action; they were in the Executive Councils to mark the stroke of the vermilion pencil, to tremble and obey. Of course, they had the opportunity of resigning, or of defying the Secretary of State; but that was a big demand to make. Careers in the Civil Service did not end at a councillorship. Able and ambitious men naturally looked forward to the Lieutenant-Governorships which were the close preserve of the Service, and even to Governorships of the Presidencies; Sir Richard Temple held the Governorship of Bombay and Lord Macdonnell was at one time earmarked for the same office.

Even if ambition did not soar to these empyrean heights, there was the India Office, with a substantial addition to the pension of £1,000 a year for five or ten years after retirement. There was, I believe, only one case of an Executive Councillor taking an independent line. It was over a small issue, the amendment of the Act which regulated conditions in the military encampments; a member felt so strongly on the subject that he announced his intention of speaking and voting against it. He was severely called to book and warned that he must obey orders; he stuck to his guns and the obnoxious clause was withdrawn; but he paid the penalty—there was no further use for him. He could not be dismissed from the Civil Service, but he could be—and was—black-marked thereafter. On the last occasion when the hated cotton-excite duties came up for endorsement, the Executive Council one and all shouted: "No," but when the charge was put to the vote they had to toe the line.

The scope and purpose of the reforms were emphatically stated in the final despatch from the India Office. They were to enable "the Government the better to realize the wants, and sentiments, of the governed, and on the other hand to give the governed a better chance of understanding, as occasion arose, the case for the Government against the misrepresentations of ignorance and malice." There was no weakening of the strength and unity of the executive power; that was to remain entirely subordinate to parliamentary control.



Hard things are said of Morley; there has been resurrected from the archives an adjective used by Lord Asquith which one hesitates to accept. He was a prickly colleague, constantly threatening to resign if he did not at once get his own way; the pawky Campbell-Bannerman was unperturbed and ultimately got so tired that he did not answer these ultimata. Less than justice has been done to the extraordinary difficulties of his position. He was a philosophic radical in the most radical of governments. He had to accept, sorely against the grain, and to justify in Parliament measures in India which were abhorrent to him. The campaign of murder and lawlessness in Bengal was at its height. The extreme course of sequestration without trial and repressive legislation were forced on the Government of India. Morley accepted them, and defended these extreme measures against the impatient criticism of many of his own party.

A word on these detentions under the drastic powers of the Regulation of 1818: the *détenus* were afterwards subjected to investigation by a retired Indian judge of the Bombay High Court, Sir Narayan Chandavarkar. He assured me that in only one case was there the slightest doubt of the guilt of the *détenus*; but they could not be brought to open trial because in the inflamed state of public opinion no jury would dare to convict them and face the risk of assassination. Nor has justice been done to the vividness of Morley's conversation.

My last interview with him is fresh in my memory. It was in 1909 when the Reform Scheme was on its passage. I had been stressing the importance of securing that the seventy millions of Mahomedans should have their place in the constitutional scheme, and he remarked that some were advocating Moslem claims not in the interests of the community itself, but in a spirit of hostility to the reforms as a whole. "Well, you cannot say that of my paper, for we have given unstinting support to your proposals." Then I went on to say (the Lloyd George Budget was racking the Conservatives): "I suppose that these are the most interesting days in your political career." "Certainly not!" Morley exclaimed. "The most dramatic period in my political life was when the first Home Rule Bill was being debated. Henry Fowler was speaking in

the House, and speaking well. No one was listening to him. All our thoughts were with the meeting of the dissident Liberals, Chamberlain and Hartington, in the committee-room upstairs. If they decided to abstain, the Bill was safe; if they resolved to oppose, then the Government was faced with defeat. That was the most dramatic moment in my parliamentary days. Then very near it was the situation created by the O'Shea divorce case. Gladstone asked me to see Parnell and advise him to go into quarantine and be disinfected. Those were not exactly his words; it was what he meant. I took the message to Parnell, and looking down upon me he said: 'John, I dare not. If I retire even temporarily the priests will tear me limb from limb.' "

The curious will find these episodes recorded in Morley's miscellaneous writings, but the written words carry none of the intensity of his conversation. Then, as I was leaving and paused by the door, Morley asked if I had no final word for him. "Yes, Mr. Morley, don't be afraid of the young men." He rose from his seat and threw down the quill pen he was using and declared: "I quite agree with you."

The special franchise for Mahomedans—nothing has been more fantastically misrepresented. The Mahomedans were slowly emerging from their isolation; the yeast of the new learning, long eschewed by this great community, was working through the Aligarh College, founded by a far-sighted man, Sir Sayad Ahmad, who realized that if his community boycotted the universities their fate was sealed. The victories of the Turks in the war with Greece gave Moslems a revived consciousness and were celebrated by illuminations in the bazaars. They were quick to appreciate that the Liberal landslide of 1906 was bound to lead to constitutional advance in India and anxiously asked themselves what was to be their place in the new India. Then was born the deputation to Minto, which assured them of direct representation through their own people and weightage by virtue of their historical tradition.

The communal representation then established has been denounced as undemocratic. What nonsense! What do we mean by democracy? Is it representation of the people by the

people? If that is accepted, then how could Mahomedans be represented in a land where they were in a permanent minority, separated from the overwhelming Hindu mass not only by history and religion but by the impenetrable barrier of caste? So far from the communal franchise being the negation of democracy it was its very ichor. Nothing was more sinister in Indian politics than the vehement opposition of many admirable Hindus to this most necessary measure. Often in contact with Hindu friends, they were urged to leave this issue alone; if they accepted it, then seeing that the interests of the two communities being common in the social and economic movements which were bound to be the great concern of the future, it would die a natural death. But no, they attacked it in season and out of season and so drove Mahomedans back on themselves; they clung tenaciously to it as the only means of political salvation.

Caste! There was the iron curtain. Travelled Mahomedans could say that although they and their families had been domiciled in India for centuries, they found themselves more at home in Islamic states than in their own country. Caste! In later years when there was presented the appalling spectacle of men who had lived in the same communities in peace and amity under the strong hand of a neutral government, falling on each other in Bengal and Bihar in an orgy of murder, rape and arson as soon as the protecting power was relaxed, we asked ourselves how these dreadful things could happen. It was not a clash between the severe monotheistic religion of Mahomet and the vague pantheism of Hinduism; it was not the memory of the days of the Moghuls and the intolerance of Aurungzebe; it was not the economic superiority of the Hindus, though all these were factors. It was caste which divided the two communities for all time; when there was no intermarriage, no interdining, when in extreme cases the touch of the non-Hindu was defilement, then there could be no unity and then the theory of the two nations emerged in unbreakable strength. It was a puzzle to me why a man of the undoubted ability of Mahomed Ali should have fomented the Khilafat movement and linked the fortunes of the Mahomedans of India with the then decadent camarilla of

Constantinople. The solution lay in his conviction that in India his people must always be in a minority, and therefore their hope lay in association with the Islamic states across the border.

The Morley-Minto Reforms settled what should be done at that stage. Whither? To that pregnant issue no serious thought was given. Defending his proposals in the House of Lords, Morley declared that: "If it could be said that this chapter of reform led directly or necessarily to the establishment of a parliamentary system in India, I for one would have nothing to do with it." In what direction, then, was poor, misguided India travelling? If there is one law in human affairs more certain than another it is that the development of criticism and obstruction in the constitutional machine, without any element of responsibility, is bound to induce an impasse.

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WE HAVE SEEN HOW STEP BY STEP BRITISH POLICY IN INDIA HAS BEEN STEADILY DIRECTED TO A POINT AT WHICH THE QUESTION OF A SELF-GOVERNING INDIA WAS BOUND TO ARISE; HOW IMPULSES, AT FIRST FAINT, HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED BY EDUCATION AND OPPORTUNITY; HOW THE GROWTH QUICKENED NINE YEARS AGO AND WAS IMMEASURABLY QUICKENED BY THE WAR. . . . THE PATHETIC CONTENTMENT OF THE MASSES IS NOT THE SOIL ON WHICH INDIAN NATIONHOOD WILL GROW, AND IN DELIBERATELY DISTURBING IT WE ARE WORKING FOR HER HIGHEST GOOD

*Montagu Chelmsford Report*

NO INTELLIGENT PERSON imagined for a moment that the constitutional fabric could remain unchanged after the war. The Cross Act, with its considerable merits, was a quarter of a century old. The Morley-Minto Reforms, with their muddled objective, had done their work. Whither had they led? The position was well stated by Thompson and Garratt when they wrote that the Government had organized for itself perpetual opposition, with no function except to criticize, no chance of ever taking office, and no real responsibility to the rather vague electorate they were supposed to represent. Parliamentary usages had been initiated and adopted on the Councils to the point where they cause the maximum of friction and short of that at which, by having real sanction behind them, they begin to do good.

India had been profoundly moved by the impact of war and was fully conscious of the great and unexpected contribution she had made to victory in men, money and munitions. The strong wine of self-determination had mounted to all heads. Before his retirement, Lord Hardinge amid his many pre-

occupations sketched out a scheme of development to meet the growing ambitions of India. All sorts and conditions of men were imitating the Abbé Sieyès in sharpening their wits for the production of paper constitutions.

They reached their climax when an ingenious civilian, and he more a man of the world than most, evolved an amazing scheme whereby Britons from the infant classes, or very near that stage, were to be earmarked for the Civil Service on attaining maturity. Running through all these discussions there were two threads. Wherever council government was established there was the tendency to treat them as little parliaments; even in the first tentative movement in the 'sixties this brought a stern rebuke from the India Office.

Britons, with their inherited traditions, could think of constitutions only in terms of the British practice. Indians, nurtured on British history and literature, followed the same line of thought. Indeed, that distinguished patriot, Srinavasa Sastri, admitted that, whatever the history of India and her conditions, he could think of self-government in no other terms. And if it is not irreverent to say so, there was always manifest in schemes emanating from the central government the tendency to try it on the dog; to adumbrate all sorts of developments in the provincial governments, but to leave the solemn arcana of the Government of India intact. On the part of those who held the reins at home was the firm determination never, no never, to allow the supreme power of Parliament to be impinged upon.

Sinha had demanded, as the spokesman for educated India, a goal and a policy. That was still remote. It was left to a wise Conservative statesman, Sir Austen Chamberlain, irrevocably to fix the goal. As these paper constitutions fell upon him thick as leaves on Vallombrosa, he laid down one fixed and guiding rule. He said in effect that he would look at nothing which did not embody the principle of responsibility. There was to be no more expansion of the power of criticism without the chance of ever taking office; no more a mere strengthening of opposition without the chastening knowledge that the critics might have to make their words good.

In passing, friends of the Government of India used to say

that Austen Chamberlain was the best Secretary of State in their experience; he kept a firm grip on policy, but did not interfere in details. It was a real loss to India and the Commonwealth when he retired from a mistaken sense of chivalry, because he had no real share of responsibility for the hapless events in Mesopotamia so ignorantly censured by the Mesopotamian Commission. There was the goal; and it was defined in words beyond the shadow of misinterpretation in the historic declaration of August, 1917: "The policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration, and of the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire."

Once again that pregnant word "responsible" was written into the draft despatch by Lord Curzon: this declaration emanated from the Coalition Government of which Mr. Churchill was a member. Those who were grappling with politics in India breathed again; it was fresh air in a turbid atmosphere; at last we knew where we were standing and had a lighthouse to guide us on our course.

The goal! Yes. But the policy; there was the rub. Not even the wildest men of Borneo thought that the time was ripe for the immediate establishment of responsible government in India, nor for the complete abdication of the overriding power of Parliament. Yet definite steps had to be taken. It was in this intermediate stage that the informal committee which had been examining the problem in London evolved what was afterwards labelled dyarchy. The personnel of that committee should be borne in mind. Two were able and experienced Indian civilians—Sir William Duke and Sir James Meston; the third was Lionel Curtis, who had made a special study of constitutional systems and had toured extensively in India. In effect, dyarchy<sup>1</sup> meant the transference to Indian ministers,

<sup>1</sup> The scheme of dyarchy which ultimately became the base of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report was worked out in London by a group comprising Sir William Duke, Lord Meston, Lord Lothian, Professor Coupland and Lionel Curtis. Sir William Duke finally produced what was called The Duke Memorandum.

responsible to enlarged legislative councils in the provinces and an expanded electorate, what were called the nation-building functions—education, public health and so forth, whilst maintaining the sovereignty of Parliament and control of finance. More and more the student of politics is oppressed by the tyranny of labels. We laugh at the Kipling story of the ingenious Indian who took the label off a soda-water bottle, stuck it on the approach to a bridge, and levied a toll from every passer-by on the ground that it was the order of the Sirkar.

How much better are we ourselves than these gullible folk? How many breathed the word dyarchy and hugged the delusion that they had used an argument? If self-government was the goal, and that was unquestioned, and the immediate step was to be a measure of responsibility, what alternative was there? None. When later the Lieutenant-Governors were asked to formulate their ideas, they could only produce a plan which embodied no real responsibility and even more dyarchy. It was in these conditions that Mr. Edwin Montagu toured India and in consultation with the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, produced their monumental report, which, hammered into shape by a strong Select Committee, resulted in the Act of 1919.

It was a curious combination, but, be it noted, Mr. Montagu was not alone: he had as colleagues two men drawn from British public life, Lord Donoughmore and Mr. Charles Roberts, and experienced assistants. Much of the report, it is understood, was the work of Sir Edward Marris, afterwards Governor of the United Provinces. The idea afterwards so industriously promulgated, that Britain and India were led astray by a meretricious Jew, has not a shadow of foundation. So, too, with that passage in the report which described the pathetic contentment of the masses which it was the purpose of the framers to disturb. The capacity of Britons to forget is unparalleled. Why, for years it had been impossible to study any official report dealing with living topics without coming across the confession that progress was impossible until apathy was removed and public opinion quickened.

There should have been included in the examination test of



every candidate for admission to the Civil Service a proof of at least a passing knowledge of the forgotten novel by Besant and Rice where the newcomer came to preach the gospel of divine discontent. If Austen Chamberlain had not resigned from the India Office he would have been pressed to make the Indian tour, and it would have been well if this had been the case. Not that the result would have been different; with his convinced belief in the necessity of responsibility in lieu of non-responsible organized criticism it is doubtful if the result would have been different; but the sober statesmanship of that distinguished man would have carried far greater weight at home. Never was inquiry more beset with prickles.

Who was top dog—the Secretary of State or the Viceroy? Actually, the Secretary of State, as the direct representative of the Imperial Government, was the dominant force; but this had to be kept in the background. The two men were as the poles asunder. Montagu, a politician to the finger-tips, quick, imaginative, rather mercurial, and with a keen perception of the goal. Chelmsford, solid, a good brain, oppressed by the burden of administration, and with all his excellent qualities not overburdened with the precious gift of imagination. It stands to the enduring credit of both that the long and difficult inquiry was without public or, in the end, any serious disagreement; but the curtain which hid these private discussions was lifted for a moment when both were entertained at dinner at the Byculla Club.

Chelmsford had on occasion a pretty wit, and in proposing the health of the Secretary of State, after the usual compliments, he slyly went on to say that one of the snags was Montagu's flights of imagination, which usually came in his bath. "Well, gentlemen, when Mr. Montagu took one bath a day according to British habit, we could keep abreast of him. But now he has fallen into our Indian habit of two baths a day it is more difficult. And, good heavens, what will happen to the Indian Empire if Mr. Montagu decides to take three baths a day?" Montagu smiled grimly and his staff thought this *jeu d'esprit* was not in the best of taste.

There is much evidence of these flights of inspiration in *The Indian Diary* which was published after Montagu's death.

Refreshing memories of personal contacts with him is an amusing occupation. The first was at Bikaner when we were both guests of the Maharajah in his pleasant retreat at Gujner, some twenty miles from the capital. If there is one spot in India more pleasant than another it is this quiet group of modest buildings on the banks of the one stretch of water on the edge of the desert. There the Maharajah, a splendid figure at the height of his powers, would assemble his friends for the famous grouse shoot, and entertain them in the best tradition of the English country house before the advent of the promiscuity which marred that agreeable relaxation. There was neither pomp nor circumstance; that was reserved for the formal occasions in the capital and the palace; just the easy informality of friends amongst friends.

Walking on the water-fringed terrace, in that splendid hour when darkness follows in a few moments the setting of the sun and the stars come out, Montagu seized me by the arm with the soothing assertion that I was the man in India he was waiting to meet, and we talked and talked for an hour. That incident is recorded in the Diary in a passage which always makes me smile. "Sir Stanley Reed, of *The Times of India*, was, however, there and I had some talk with him. What he really wants is provincial autonomy and then firm provincial bureaucratic government, coupled with a desire to bring the Native Princes into British India. He is a very willing, well-meaning, good journalist, full of pious aspirations and no definite views." Good heavens! Did the good man think that at the outset of the inquiry I had my own scheme cut and dried—the last idea any intelligent newspaper man could entertain!

I make no apology for the two cardinal points. It had long been my conviction that the great administrative areas which were called provinces should no longer be treated as humble appanages of the central government, but as States within a federation with effective responsibility for their own affairs. For, after all, these were costly and elaborate administrations, in different stages of development, each with its own special problems; and to hold back the most advanced because of the pace of the slowest and all in the iron grip of an all-pervading

centre was to stifle progress. Indeed, in our friendly discussions the members of the Government of India dubbed me the arch-decentralizer and I pleaded guilty to the charge, but always with this caveat—the need for a strong centre was paramount. “I want you to interfere less, so that you may control more; under the present system you are always interfering in petty details and are not exercising that general direction of policies; this should be your job and you are not doing it.” Again, in contacts with the Indian Princes, and in particular with the ablest of the Order, Bikaner and Scindia, in season and out of season I pressed upon them the need to lose no opportunity of associating themselves and their States with British India; that association would be useful to both, but if the States remained entirely apart from British India, then with the inevitable march of events a definite period could be set to their continued existence. But I cannot recall that I urged a firm provincial bureaucratic government; a firm government, certainly; but bureaucratic, never.

Well, the days passed and halfway through the inquiry Bombay was again the scene. Meeting my wife, Lady Willingdon asked her what I had been doing with Montagu. She replied that she knew nothing; I never discussed politics with her.

“Oh,” said the Great Lady, “last night Montagu came to dinner, and in the middle of the feast he put his head on his hands and went off to bed.” What further sin was mine? Turning to the Diary there is this passage. “But I had a severe blow when we saw Stanley Reed in the evening. Sir Stanley, to whom I described my scheme in detail, objects to it altogether. He wants complete authority on all subjects by the Legislative Council, subject to the veto; my scheme would produce apathy and would not strike any imagination, and has no chance of success. The only subject he would reserve would be the police. As, therefore, there is nothing in principle between us but the details of the A and B lists (the reserved and the transferred subjects) I cannot understand his vehemence, but certainly as Reed is the only progressive journalist in India his opposition is very, very sad.” Again, I plead guilty; Montagu and Chelmsford, for both

were present at this discussion, were half-hearted; I protested, perhaps too hotly, that *The Times of India* would have nothing to do with any scheme which, professing to embody a real measure of responsibility, so hedged it in with reservations and safeguards—horrid term—that it did nothing of the sort; that the wisest and safest plan was to throw our hearts over the hedge and follow boldly thereafter; and that anything in the shape of a sham would be a disaster. We finished good friends in the end. On the last pages of the Diary there is the note: "After breakfast Reed came to see me. . . . I described to him the whole scheme; he said we had accomplished a great deal, and I think we can rely upon his support and upon his being a good influence with Willingdon." Humph! What did Willingdon himself think of that entry?

The scheme, despite many unnecessary reservations, had the full and unwavering support of the paper. Looking back, I am convinced that it was the best scheme which could be framed in the conditions of the day, and the Montagu-Chelmsford Report will take its place in history alongside the famous report of Lord Durham on the governance of Canada as one of the classics in the history of the Commonwealth and Empire. Never had a scheme of constitutional reform to encounter such stormy weather. The stars in their courses fought against it. It was promulgated almost simultaneously with the publication of the Rowlatt Report advocating the suspension of trial by jury—a report which in the opinion of Mrs. Annie Besant (who after her excursion into Home Rule had reacted to the support of the Government) justified revolution—and it had to encounter the storm of resentment aroused by the fashioning of that instrument of repression in the hour of victory.

Over the first meetings of the enlarged councils with their wider powers hung the shadow of Jhallianwall Bagh and the disturbances in the Punjab inciting Afghanistan to commit the folly of invasion. These were apparent on the surface; deeper forces are less recognized.

In Bombay Lord Lloyd established the strongest administration the Province had known; the members of the Executive Council and the Ministers were drawn from the best elements

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in public life and commanded respect by their character and abilities; and, charged as he often was with being arbitrary, he never once had to invoke the special powers reserved to the Governor. In Madras Willingdon took an even bolder step; the elections had resulted in a decisive victory for the non-Brahmin party, which had long groaned under Brahminical domination; he drew his Ministers from the largest party in the Councils and established, as nearly as could be, parliamentary government. The greatest snag was in the unfortunate economic conditions of the day. The hectic boom of the immediate post-war days was followed by a disastrous slump, aggravated by an unwise currency policy; the financial rein was tight drawn; Ministers in charge of the reserved departments coming to office full of progressive ideas could not justify themselves in the eyes of the impatient public by practical achievement.

Notwithstanding all these grievous handicaps the Act of 1919 would have attained its end—it did survive for fifteen years, but with diminishing repute in the executives—if it had not been for this condition. It was a transitory measure; it provided for the re-examination of the constitution in ten years. Why was this stipulation made? Some assert that it was a sop to the Conservatives in Parliament who had reluctantly accepted the scheme and insisted on a statutory right to think again. That may be; certainly in India the reasoning was otherwise. Montagu was naturally and wisely bent on carrying Indian liberal thought with him. The scheme, as indeed any scheme save for immediate full responsibility, was bound to fall short of unreasoning anticipations. No one attempted to disguise that it was anything but a transitory measure—a halfway house to full self-government and, when this was stressed, the answer was plain. It was that the British Government was so beset by problems of the greatest magnitude that India could only have a secondary place; the transitory stage would be indefinitely prolonged. It was to meet this valid criticism that a definite time limit was affixed to the life of the measure giving the assurance that at the end of this period the scene would be re-examined.

There was yet another disturbing factor. In India Acts of  
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Parliament are examined through a magnifying glass to discern not what they give, but what they withhold. What the Act gave could only be learnt by administrative experience; in effect it embodied something so near to provincial home rule that the balance was of little account. What it withheld, often unnecessarily withheld, was on the printed page. Almost before the ink was dry there arose the demand for an extension of the transferred powers, especially in the Centre, and a Committee of the Legislature made a few tentative suggestions. Indian friends, whose opinion cannot be disregarded, urged that an immediate expansion of the authority of the legislature and of ministers would have given the governments life and greater durability; that is as it may be, but it would have been asking too much of Parliament so soon after the Act was passed, with some misgivings, and provision made for an overhaul at a comparatively early date, to do the work afresh before the fruits were apparent.

Before passing over this phase in the political history of India, two footnotes. Where two or three Anglo-Indians—former members of the Civil Service, the Police, or business men—are gathered together and India comes under discussion, it would be safe to wager that argument would run on these lines.

Montagu came to India knowing nothing of the country and foisted on it a constitution totally unsuited to its needs. Then he perversely set himself to disturb the placid contentment which was arresting progress and so exacerbated the discontents. Not one word will be said of the patent facts that the clear goal of the British connexion was defined by one Conservative statesman and underlined by another; that the placid contentment was the stumbling block in all progressive policies; and that the inquiry which induced the report was assisted by two men drawn from British public life, one a Conservative and the other a Liberal; finally, that the principles of the Report were endorsed by the Government of India as a whole, after it had been well digested. So often is the history of India writ. When later Montagu was dismissed from office because he published a strong despatch from the Government of India urging that Moslem opinion should

have weight in the discussion of the peace treaty with Turkey, the general view in these and many other circles was that it served him right. Well! Well! Now the truth can be told.

What was the origin of that despatch? In a sense it was due to the inspiration of His Highness the Aga Khan. In one of our many talks on the political situation in India, generally at breakfast in the Aga's pleasant bungalow in Bombay, facing the westering sea, he stressed the importance of action which would allay the just resentment of the seventy millions of Moslems in India at the draft treaty with the Turks. For these people deserved well of the British Government. They were sorely tried when Turkey entered the war on the side of Germany.

The Khilafat agitation had not gone very deep in its extreme form, but after all the Turks were co-religionists and they represented the only surviving great Islamic State. The strain was great; it was staunchly borne. With a few minor incidents, the Moslems stood four-square behind the Allies, and their reward was the projected expulsion of the Turks from the homelands of Thrace and from Constantinople. I stressed this with the Viceroy, Lord Reading, when he discussed with me the question of punitive action against the Ali brothers, and with Lord Lloyd, the Governor of Bombay, who had travelled widely in Islamic lands. The fruit was the despatch which aroused such a furore; the original draft was the work of Lloyd; it was endorsed by the Government of India; and somewhat precipitately issued by Montagu. Curzon naturally protested and reasonably; as Foreign Secretary he ought to have been consulted; and Montagu had to go. That is not the whole truth by any means.

Soon afterwards, leaving a lunch where many who loved India had gathered together, Montagu took me by the arm and said: "Come to the club and tell me what is happening in India." So when I protested that he knew far better than myself the trend of Indian politics, he went on to say: "Nothing of the sort. From the day of my dismissal an iron curtain has descended between me and the India Office; not once have I been consulted, no information has been vouchsafed to me. Now for the actual circumstances of my dismissal.

It was not pressed by Curzon; after his protest he took no further action. It was insisted upon by Lloyd George. Why? Because when the draft treaty of Sèvres was put before me as Secretary of State for India I declined to endorse it; in view of the definite statement that we were not fighting to drive the Turks from Thrace and Constantinople, I regarded it as a breach of faith with the Moslems, for whom I was trustee. Lloyd George never forgave me; he bided his time and I was dismissed."

Perhaps there were two other reasons. Montagu was an Asquith man. Asquith was intensely loyal to his associates, and I can well recall the patience with which he listened to Montagu in one of those dreary debates in the Commons which were supposed to be the response of Parliament to its statutory responsibility to India. Again, when Lord Reading was appointed Viceroy there were heart-searchings. Their nature had better be stated frankly. Many of those who recognized the outstanding abilities and services of Lord Reading honestly doubted whether it was wise to select a member of the Jewish community for this high office. Certainly some Mahomedan friends protested. But a Jew Viceroy and a Jew Secretary of State—that was another matter; there was an understanding that, with the assumption of office by Reading, Montagu would retire; he did not. With all his faults, Montagu deserved well of India and of Britain. His heart was in his Indian work; if he had not insisted on the political bearings of constitutional reform in circles enmeshed in administrative details progress would have been indefinite and inconclusive. He well merited the statue which stands on the fringe of the *maidan* in Bombay.

Before leaving the Montagu-Chelmsford Report a memory occurs, not important in itself, but illustrative of the besetting detachment of the Government of India from even elementary politics. Chelmsford was *fou* with the report; he could think of little else the moment current business was put aside. Walking in the grounds of Viceregal Lodge one morning, I put this to him: "Do you believe in your report?" "Of course I do, it represents the major work of these many months." "Well, sir, in your case I would see that the report was judged



on its merits, not by any jaundiced interpretation in the newspaper Press or by politicians." "What do you mean by that?" "Just this. Put yourself in the position of the responsible newspaper editor—and there are responsible editors. At noon of the day of publication it will be placed in their hands, a ponderous blue book of several hundred pages; and in a few hours he will be expected to produce for his paper a digest of the recommendations and the reasons therefor; and a sober leading article. It just cannot be done.

"Then consider the Indian publicist. If he seeks to study the report, he will have to go to the Government Agents—if he can find out who they are—probably to be told that no copies are available, and that the cost of this clumsy publication will be, say, seven and sixpence. Before he can get the report public opinion will have been perverted by misleading versions of the contents, and it is only the first step that counts."

Chelmsford was taken by surprise: "Humph! What do you suggest?" So I unfolded my own scheme. It was that the report should be published not as a blue book, but in a handy form; that copies should be on sale at every bookshop on the day of publication at the price of one and sixpence. Then on the morning of issue there should be telegraphed to every daily newspaper in India a thousand-word summary through the agency of the Central Publicity Board, to be immediately followed by an explanatory pamphlet for sale at a penny, which the Provincial Publicity Boards could translate into the vernaculars. The idea was so revolutionary that it shook the secretariats, but it germinated, with this slight difference—the Government of India took the responsibility of publication on itself. Thirty thousand copies were sold in a few months and this was one of the few issues which showed a decent profit. Students of Indian politics who have on their shelves a neat array of Government issues, uniform in style, easy to handle and read, may find in this convenience some excuse for one from whose revolutionary politics they probably vehemently differ.

It would be pleasant to gloze over the years that followed and go straight to the Act of 1935; they were dark days for

those who loved India, proud of the British connexion; but so to do would be to misread political history. The Act of 1919 provided for the examination of the working of the Indian constitution within ten years of its passing. Lord Birkenhead was at the India Office. It was decided to anticipate the inquiry by two years and the appointment of a statutory commission under the chairmanship of Sir John Simon was announced. Why this premature step? Many explanations have been offered. In India a common thought was that the National Government knew that its term of office was coming to an end and sought to rush through the inquiry before a Labour Cabinet came into office.

The Commission! Lord Lloyd rang me up in my Chiltern abode and said: "I have seen the personnel of the Commission; you will not like it, nor do I." Who could? Just consider the implications of this step. The Commission was to frame for the decision of Parliament the form of government under which Indians were to live for probably a generation. From it Indians were excluded. The chairman was a very distinguished lawyer; Lord Burnham was personally known to some Indian journalists for his kindly and generous hospitality as head of the Empire Press Union; Mr. Attlee had not emerged into the limelight.

As for the other members, well, a kindly veil had better be drawn over their qualifications. Ministers who walk to their seats with steps solemn, ponderous and slow, with Parliamentary Private Secretaries proudly bearing the red boxes behind them; back-benchers who hold their heads higher when the police stop traffic for their march to Palace Yard, quite naturally think no small beer of themselves. They would be shocked at the repute in which they are held abroad. When it was a question of appointing a chairman of one of the Currency Commissions and Philip Snowden's name was mentioned, I remarked to an Indian industrialist that this would be an admirable appointment. "Snowden," he rejoined. "Who is Snowden? Never heard of him."

Indian politicians who had grown grey in the public life of their country were summoned to headquarters and told that they might be heard as witnesses; but they were to have

no major part in fashioning the instrument of government. No greater insult was ever offered to a proud and sensitive people. No wonder they saw red and the greater the sense of responsibility the hotter the indignation voiced by men like Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. Whilst it is easy to be wise after the event, the consequences of this act of folly were apparent to all who knew their India. They were clear to me.

Sir John Simon asked me to talk over the prospect and we met in his chambers. Quite unreservedly I told him that his report in these conditions was waste-paper before the first line was written. He was aghast at this vehemence, and asked for suggestions. "Take no notice of what I or anyone else may say. Go to India yourself, make your own personal inquiries into the temper of the people with whom you will have to work, and then advise the Government." Sir John argued that they would not allow him to do that and I warned him that if that was so then no one could help him. Nor was that prophecy vain. The Commission staggered round India boycotted by all reputable people. It was soon apparent that no recommendations would have the slightest value unless Indian opinion was associated with them. It was not a question of processions of students and boys waving black flags and crying "Simon, go back," that mattered; it was the burning resentment at the humiliation felt under this wanton provocation.

Within the fabric of the terms of reference the Commission did seek to enlist Indian support, and step by step the Joint Committee to work with it was established, but it was fatally handicapped by nomination; its members could not agree amongst themselves, and the terribly verbose minutes it produced, illumined by one reasoned statement from Sir Kikabhai Premchand, a Bombay financier of standing, were and are in dust and ashes. All this heat and prejudice was unnecessary. In converse with Indian friends I always maintained that it was the intention of the Act of 1919 that the statutory inquiry should be a parliamentary body. But that the sensible course would have been for the Viceroy to call the two Houses of the Legislature together in joint session; to inform them of the appointment of the Commission; and then invite them to appoint from amongst their number a corresponding body to

work with it. "That," they replied, "would have been entirely satisfactory."

The Simon Report, with all the labour it represented, was a dead letter; nobody will ever examine it except to learn how not to do things; but before it is finally interred, one tribute should be made. The first volume is the most masterly survey of the conditions of the problem in official literature; if the recommendations in the second volume run away from all this analysis that is no fault of the writer or writers, who did their own work well.

It would be pleasant to blot out the memories of the years which followed. They were the most difficult in the British connexion with India, and imposed an almost intolerable strain on those in authority and the men and women who had cast in their lot with the country. Armed insurrection could be met with the usual weapons; civil strife with the long arm of the law supported by force; but mass civil disobedience—that was quite another story. Anarchical crime and murder stalked the land; an unreasoning wave of unrest distracted industry; and the repugnant task of beating the crowds who offered themselves for yet another beating in their defiance of authority was a beastly duty forced on those who had to maintain the rule of law in a land where the crust between the rule of law and anarchy is very thin indeed. Yet without a broad statement of the underlying influences there cannot be an understanding of the march of events which led to the decision to remit to Indian hands the governance of the great dependency.

The Simon Report, stillborn, was buried ten thousand fathoms deep. What was to take its place? There was a gleam of hope when the first Round Table Conference met in London, for with infinite tact and patience Lord Irwin, the Viceroy, brought together all the best elements in Indian public life, including the important rulers of the Indian States, except the Congress leaders, who still stood aloof. That Conference struck a new, and for the moment an inspiring, hope.

I vividly recall the eve of the Conference. I was discussing the issues with the Maharajah of Bikaner, so long the most dynamic figure amongst the rulers of the Indian States, and

he remarked: "Tomorrow Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru will invite the Indian Princes to join an All-Indian Federation. What should be our response?" Naturally the reply was not to presume to advise one who spoke for his Order with such unique knowledge and responsibility and awaited his own reactions. "We are inclined to accept it," Bikaner went on to say, "and the Maharajah Gaekwar of Baroda who leads our deputation has authorized me so to do." In those circumstances there was no ground for hesitation. "Seize it with both hands, Your Highness, for this is the golden opportunity. How often and how long have I urged the Indian States to miss no opportunity of integrating their States with the Government of India. Linked with British India in an indivisible whole, the States with their experience have a great contribution to make to Indian policy. Divorced from British India and resting on their ancient treaties, even if they be pronounced as inviolate and inviolable, a definite and perhaps not too long a term will be set to their separate and autocratic survival."

The invitation to join a federation was made. It was accepted, subject to the right to reconsider the position when the complete picture was presented, and the dawn of a new age seemed to have broken.

This guiding principle of an All-Indian Federation, embracing the country as a whole, allayed many doubts and stilled some fears. Strong elements in all parties in Parliament were ready to concede substantial home rule to the provinces. But even the most progressive amongst them boggled at a truly responsible government at the centre, involving, as it was bound to do, the transfer of authority from Parliament to India. They were better content with the belief that the association of the Indian States with the administration gave the assurance of a stabilizing experience in the legislature and the cabinet, and crossed one dangerous stile—the position of these States in relation to the Crown.

Once the principle of federation, with responsibility at the centre, was accepted progress was rapid; in all respects save one, the representation of the minorities, there was a sufficient measure of agreement to form the foundation of a Government

of India Act. The minorities were the stumbling block. No agreement was possible, and the shadow of partition loomed on the horizon. The Indian National Congress, of course, stood aloof. Was Lord Irwin right in discarding all precedent and in many personal discussions with Mr. Gandhi paying no account or care for a mythical prestige, making it possible for him to participate in the second Round Table Conference? Few really acquainted with the Indian scene can doubt that he was.

Whilst the delegates to the first conference represented much that was best in the political life of India and its most stable elements, the Indian National Congress was the unquestioned embodiment of mass Hindu opinion. Whether in or out of the Congress, Mr. Gandhi was its guiding force. If the governance of India was to be modified by agreement, then obviously no effort could be spared to secure the widest attainable measure of accord. In these unorthodox courses it is understood Lord Irwin had the support of the ablest of the Indian civilians, of one whom may be dubbed the last of the great civilians. Yet Mr. Gandhi's presence in London made agreement more remote than ever. Armed with despotic power to be the sole exponent of Congress policy, his mind was as ever remote from constructive action. Claiming to represent ninety-five per cent of the peoples of India, he drove the minorities into one compact body.

Able led by the Aga Khan they drew close together in defence of their common interests, and in a powerful memorandum, which they proved by statistics to embody the views of fifty-two per cent of the population, they established their claim to a definite status in any amended Indian constitution. Even then, though Mr. Gandhi returned to India to revive the civil disobedience movement, all would have been well if there had been a resolute spirit in the British Government. It would be exaggerating, and perhaps unfair, to say that *locomotor ataxy* paralysed their movement; but they were painfully, disastrously painfully, slow. By the time the third Round Table Conference with its Rump membership had completed its task everyone was sick of conferences and the pale shadow of enthusiasm had flickered out. For

eighteen weary months the Joint Select Committee of the two Houses of Parliament trod its devious path. The final conclusions of the Government, liberal as they were in effect, were presented in a White Paper so cold in its language that it made no appeal to the Indian peoples.

The Act of 1935 itself met with so much opposition in Parliament that distrust was intensified. How often have those who sought to serve India longed for the golden pen of the Lord Derby who, obeying the behest of a wise Sovereign, embodied the great Proclamation of Queen Victoria in generous terms which went straight to the heart of an emotional people! How often have they too wished that the term "safeguards" had never been invented! Always Parliament, until the last phase, seemed to speak of safeguards rather than in the spirit of progress, as if by writing a few words into an Act it arrested the vigorous current of political thought and movement. Often in talk with Indian friends I urged them to put this matter of safeguards in proper perspective, recognizing, as Ramsay MacDonald said in the earliest days of the Conference, certain safeguards are either embodied or inherent in every constitution. If I were an Indian, I used to say, I would tell English friends to put into the Act as many safeguards as they liked, in the full knowledge that only the essential ones would be operative and the others would fall into desuetude. As I am an Englishman I say I want only one safeguard, and that is the overriding authority in emergencies of the Viceroy and the Governors. There is nothing undemocratic in a safeguard which preserves the power of the Head of the State. If my recollection of Bryce is correct, over fifty per cent of the decisions of Congress were vetoed by the President of the day. But it was a sickly practice always to be harping on the safeguards until a people not politically minded came to think that what purported to be a liberal measure consisted mainly of safeguards designed to dominate such poor concession of responsibility that it was a thing of little account.

Still, cluttered up as it was with safeguards, nothing will shake my conviction that the Act of 1935 was a great Act, worthy of a Parliament fully conscious of its immense respon-

sibilities. It was the boldest development of the principles of the Commonwealth in our history, and the most striking surrender of power which with all faults had been well exercised and which the British people felt could still be well exercised for the lasting benefit of the Indian peoples. For that Act embodied three great principles. It preserved intact the unity of India, which was the pride and glory of the British connexion; nay, more, it established a larger unity by welding the Indian States into the fabric of the administration. It established an effective responsibility at the centre, with the machinery for the development of that responsibility into Dominion status as the many safeguards perished from disuse; and it raised the great provinces into self-governing States within the federation, allowing freedom of growth suited to their varying conditions. Unity; Responsibility; Diversity—these were no mean or unworthy objectives. How came it about then that so wise a measure failed of its main purpose? Like all other Indian issues this admits of no dogmatic or easy answer, nor is the whole truth told in the official records.

Frustration was caused in no small degree by the depressing slowness of constitution-making. The long-drawn-out conferences chilled the enthusiasm aroused by the emergence of the principle of federation. Then the leisurely proceedings of the Joint Select Committee of Parliament which examined the draft Bill deepened suspicion and depression. The Princes, ready to surrender some of their treaty rights for the achievement of unity and responsibility, began to think again and again—to consider not what they were gaining but what they might be losing. Incapable of acting together, the still, small voice of dissent was heard, and another blessed, or accursed, word was coined—confederation in lieu of federation.

How often has it appeared to those who appreciated the strength of the growing political forces in India that nothing could save the Indian States from themselves? In the intermediate stage, when the Princes were considering the terms on which they would accede to the federation, the Maharajah of Bikaner invited me to examine the statement of reservations propounded by his State. There were scores of them. "Your Highness, how many of these are really important?" "Perhaps



five," he replied, "but we have put in everything we could think of." This from the wisest member of the princely Order; how was it possible to make progress in such circumstances? Still, I am firm in the belief that the Act would have functioned, and that it would have furnished the means for the peaceful transfer of responsibility to Indian hands, without the sundering of its unity, without the dreadful migrations and massacres which marked the final stages, were it not for two other happenings.

It was a grievous day when, the Act being on the statute book, Sir Samuel Hoare moved from the Indian Secretaryship to the Admiralty. Hoare was the driving force behind the Act; he believed in it; and in his long examination by the Joint Select Committee he betrayed a mastery of the complicated Bill such as has rarely been manifested by any Minister. More, though a Conservative, he had won the confidence of the prominent Indians in his integrity and good intent, even when there were strong differences between them. If he had remained at the India Office he would have furnished the motive power essential to bring the federation into being. Of course, the Indian National Congress would have stood aloof. But there is a magic in liberal constitutions which draws intelligent men like a magnet. Just as the Congress boycotted the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, and then were brought within their ambit by the advice of C. R. Das, so would its leaders have learnt that there was a field for constructive work within the constitution far transcending in interest and importance the barren practice of non-co-operation. Of course, some of the Indian States—certainly Hyderabad—would have stood aloof, but experience would have revealed that in isolation they were moving towards extinction.

After Hoare's departure a blanket of inertia fell on both the India Office and the Government of India. On a visit to Delhi I was shocked beyond measure to find an attitude of almost complete indifference to the federal idea, to leave it to grow or wilt as circumstances dictated. So much so that I was moved to address a vehement protest to the Viceroy insisting that it was the responsibility of the Government which held all authority in its hands to do more than just administer and

to throw the whole weight of its influence behind the decisions of Parliament. Lost days which could not be recovered.

It was a still more grievous day when a small corps of politicians in Britain launched a raging, tearing campaign against the Act and the transfer of power it represented. Die-hard civilians were resurrected from their obscure retirement to frighten the country with horrific pictures of what was bound to happen; the elements of reaction were mobilized in and out of Parliament. This had little effect on the passage of the Act—it went through the usual stages despite these moanings and groanings—but they were not without their mischievous influence.

Indian publicists, looking through the wrong end of the telescope and seeing not what was given but what was withheld, grew more and more suspicious; they became imbued with the idea that in practice the reserved powers would be developed and responsibility whittled down. What was in the minds of those who played on the fears and prejudices of the British electorate? Did they think that political activity in India stopped short when viewed from the enlightened standpoint of a subaltern of horse nearly four decades earlier? Did they think that the Declaration of 1917, with its clear definition of responsible government as the goal of our policy, was just another scrap of paper? The heart of the country was sound. As a speaker for the Union of Britain and India, formed to put the stern facts before the country under the direction of an able retired civilian, Sir John Thompson, it was my lot to address meetings in many places and to divers audiences. Only once did I fail to win agreement; that exception was startling. It was at an aristocratic meeting in the West End of London, and the heat, passion and prejudice displayed by ladies who knew nothing of India was a revelation. Afterwards, one member of the audience, who really did know what she was talking about, wrote to say she never felt so ashamed of her sex. If this was the only contribution a section of the aristocracy could make to the solution of the problems of Empire, well, we think of the ships that pass in the night.

It is only an opinion, but perhaps as good as any other opinion, and at least it is based on experience, the full imple-

mentation of the Act of 1935 was the last opportunity of ensuring that the inevitable transfer of authority could be made without shattering the unity of India, without the horrors of mass migration and bloodshed. Those who hindered or prejudiced the wise decisions of Parliament have a fearful responsibility for what followed. Whether they are conscious of it or not, there it remains; history will certainly place it squarely on their shoulders.

Very soon after the passage of the Act my intimate association with India and its problems ceased. A new field of activity opened with entry into Parliament, and the scene passed to Westminster. Before opening those pages, perhaps it is opportune to consider what part Mr. Gandhi played in the stirring life of India. A greater literature has grown round this remarkable man than any other figure in our generation.

What was he—saint or politician? Both. What was his contribution to India's independence? Certainly not constructive, yet without his participation independence might have lagged for a decade. Mr. Gandhi was a law unto himself, and no Westerner could fully understand him, even if his whole consciousness was revealed to his colleagues. Towards the end of January, 1948, Mr. Wilson Harris, who has ably restored the status of the *Spectator*, rang me up to say that Mr. Gandhi was again starving himself to death, so would I take my coat off and give him an article on his life and work. To hear Wilson Harris is to obey, but in sending him the article I advised him that the fast would not go to the point of death. The assassin's bullet did. If this attempt to portray some of the activities is reproduced from the *Spectator* it is not from egotism, but because often the impression drawn from the vivid present is more revealing than later objective studies.

"With the tragic death of Mahatma Gandhi there passes the most arresting personality that has swept over the vast mosaic of India for generations. Let there be no mistake about that. At the height of his influence in the early 'twenties tens of thousands of every race and creed gathered to do him reverence. All who could approach near enough found it an inestimable privilege to take the dust from his feet—the highest tribute any Indian can pay. For nearly three decades

wherever politicians and publicists assembled in conclave his word was law. Again and again it seemed as if his power had passed; the emergency arose and it was found in undiminished force. His mere presence in Calcutta materially influenced the settlement of one of the knottiest issues in partition—the incorporation of the great city of Calcutta in India instead of Eastern Pakistan.

“And recently, amid the heat and passion of the communal strife involved in partition, exacerbated by the dreadful massacres in the Punjab, tension everywhere and the bitter controversy over Junagadh and Kashmir, his threat to fast to death compelled men to think again. None would dare to say these vital issues are settled; but the wicked talk of war between the two Dominions has died down and there is a new spirit of amity abroad. Many will seek to explain the source of this unparalleled influence. None will succeed, for it is many-sided.

“Yet measured by the practical test, will it not be said that Mahatma Gandhi failed? He set himself three great objectives—the freedom of India, Hindu-Moslem unity and industrial regeneration through the spinning-wheel. The great surge towards nationalism did not originate with him, as his disciple, the Rev. C. F. Andrews, claimed. Far from it; the foundations were laid deep long before his day by Pherozeshah Mehta, Surendranath Bannerji and the distinguished men who founded and nurtured the Indian National Congress. They were of the West, occidental to the core, the first-fruits of the universities, imbued with the spirit of the early professors who left their impress on small classes. They looked for self-government on the British model, broadening from precedent to precedent. Nor was he the first to raise the standard of Home Rule and bid Indians to look to their own past as well as to the West; that was the work of Mrs. Besant.

“None poured greater scorn on parliamentary institutions than Gandhi himself; his idea of an earthly paradise was a conclave of village elders sitting under the banyan tree regulating their own affairs. This was one of the secrets of his political influence; he never defined, for with definitions come differences. ‘Follow me,’ he said, when he launched the non-

co-operation movement, 'and I will give you swaraj in a year.' 'What do you mean by swaraj?' he was asked, and replied: 'That is not for me, but for the politicians.' This very simplicity gave strength in a land without political traditions; indeed, it may be doubted whether his negative attitude at the second Round Table Conference and final embargo on Sir Stafford Cripps's proposals did not delay rather than quicken the pace. In the result, his 'Quit India' slogan, even with bloody chaos as its aftermath, drove the surge of nationalism forward with an impetuosity which no constructive scheme could have attained, and compelled the drastic operation of a date for our definite withdrawal with all the risks entailed.

"Hindu-Moslem unity—the Punjab gives the answer. Often when Mahatma Gandhi was touring with Mahomed Ali on his right hand, and Shaukat Ali on his left, I asked what was behind Mahomed Ali's astute brain; Shaukat was just a blusterer. Behind the façade of unity he was working, through the Khilafat movement, for a union of Islamic States which would be a counterweight to the Hindu domination in India.

"The spinning-wheel? The dark satanic mills of Bombay, Ahmedabad and Sholapur still roar, often throughout the twenty-four hours of the day. The spinning-wheel, the emblematic charka—if any survive it is as museum pieces. The Gandhi cap, the box-like headgear, is common because inexpensive and convenient; but the rough hand-spun and woven cloth with which devoted followers scarified their skins as with hair shirts is relegated to its proper home in the countryside. But here lay the germ of a great idea. Experienced District Officers have recorded that in a good year between the ingathering of the rain crop in November and preparation for the next harvest millions of villagers do little or nothing. Village industries would do more than anything else to lighten the terrible burden of poverty which presses on the rapidly growing population, but they must be more attractive than a spinning-wheel with a reward of fourpence for a full working day.

"Nothing redounds more to Mahatma Gandhi's honour than his championship of the Depressed Classes, now known as the Scheduled Castes. The picture of this little gentleman

living in the sweepers' quarters, armed with the badge of the craft, the broom, cheerfully performing the most menial offices—unspeakable degradation to the caste Hindu—must profoundly move any who understand the brutal oppression of the caste system. Yet one is compelled to ask whether the Mahatma's championship did them real service; certainly his fast at Poona, compelling the abandonment of the system of direct representation provided in the 1935 Act, and substituting a complicated method of indirect voting, even with weightage, weakened their position in the body politic. The man who speaks with authority for the Scheduled Castes, Dr. Ambedkar, is under no illusions, as his recent study discloses.

"No; it is not in the field of achievement we must seek the springs of the Mahatma's wonderful influence, but in things of the spirit. He found in South Africa the practice of Satyagraha—truth-force, or soul-force, expressed in non-violent disobedience, Ahimsah—the inspiration which could move men and women to great suffering and the sympathetic if politically embarrassed General Smuts to a relaxation of the harsh anti-Asiatic laws of the Union Government. Thereafter this became an obsession. The non-violence became a term of reproach, with a series of massacres commencing with the tragedy of Chauri Chaura; the spirit remained. Earth-bound publicists with their tongues in their cheeks may have exploited the message for their own ends, but it was the dynamic force which moved multitudes of people and won for Mahatma Gandhi admiration in many parts of the world, not least in the United States. Nor was there lacking the element of guile, as Bose found to his cost. He won the Presidentship of the Congress against the Mahatma's strong opposition; on the eve of what was to have been his great day Gandhi inaugurated a fast over a minor affair in the Kathiawar State of Rajkot, all eyes were turned on him, the Congress session was a flop.

"His ascetic life made a powerful appeal to a people to whom the Sunyasi is an object of deep respect and austerities the path to the higher thought. In his own life the practice of these austerities enabled him to carry on a great work involving immense exertions, though handicapped by a weak

physique, to the age of seventy-eight—a very advanced span of life for an Indian. Linked with these rare attributes were a sweetness of temper, a gentleness and a courtesy which won affection and respect. Frequently in my working days in India he would push open the half-door of my room and say: ‘May I come in and pour out my soul?’ And for an hour he would say whatever he thought on all the questions of the hour. He was one of those men you instinctively wanted to agree with, even if your common sense recoiled. No final verdict on his life and work is possible today; perhaps it never will be. His death removes one of the most remarkable figures of the age, one who profoundly moved and influenced millions in India and abroad. If he leaves one message more pregnant than any other to us of the West it is this: with our increasingly complex civilization we fasten on ourselves each year heavier and yet heavier fetters, each link weighted with the things which really do not matter.”

There is an aspect of the civil disobedience movement which was Mr. Gandhi’s obsession. ‘Thousands of those who defied authority and went to gaol were moved by a desire to serve their country, however mistaken, and were prepared to suffer the pains of imprisonment. Others? This experience is illuminating. On one of my periodic visits to India I learnt that a good friend, who had joined the band of the elect, was temporarily released because of family reasons. We had a frank talk and I put the issue to him, because he and his father had always been good friends and he had made great sacrifices for his faith. “Look here! If you sincerely believe that you are serving your country by spending the best years of your life in gaol, stand fast and God be with you. But if you, on reflection, feel that you are mistaken, be a man and come out and say so.” His reply was significant. “There is not one of the civil resisters now in gaol who believes in the value of defying the law. They embarked on civil disobedience in the belief that they would soon be released in one of the many ‘settlements.’ They have not the courage now to admit that they are wrong. As for Gandhi, he is wrapped up in the *harijan* movement. He does not care a jot whether we live or die; whether we are bond or free.”

## AN INTERLUDE: THE WORK THAT ENDURETH

"LET US NOW PRAISE FAMOUS MEN"—  
MEN OF LITTLE SHOWING—  
FOR THEIR WORK CONTINUETH,  
AND THEIR WORK CONTINUETH,  
BROAD AND DEEP CONTINUETH,  
GREATER THAN THEIR KNOWING<sup>1</sup>

*Rudyard Kipling*

MANY VOICES HAVE sung paens of The Great Ones of the past. Of the Viceroys and Governors-General—Hastings, Wellesley, Dalhousie, Curzon and Hardinge. Of the Governors who have left their mark on Provinces larger than most of the European States—Lawrence, Macdonnell, Elphinstone and Lloyd. Of the Indian Civil Service, rarely more than a thousand strong, the cream of our universities, who represented the Raj, as Heads of the Districts, to the common folk. The ancillary services—Public Works, Forests, Medical—whose work is done. What monuments will they leave? The stately homes of the Viceroys in Calcutta and New Delhi—to what uses will they be put? The portraits which hang on these walls, the statues which adorn the public places—how long will they hang or stand?

Whatever passes, the work of the engineer will remain as long as there is any government in India. I sing the song of the *Engineer*. Whatever may pass, their handiwork will remain, an enduring monument to the imagination, skill and courage with which they brought water to the parched fields, the transport which distributed the abounding produce of long desert lands to a hungry people increasing at the rate of five millions a year, to the ports for shipment abroad.

<sup>1</sup> Reproduced, by permission, from the *Engineer*.



Would that this grateful task were entrusted to competent hands. I am not an engineer, but perhaps the engineer would screen the dramatic factor under cusecs and masonry masses, as prodigious, perhaps as unmeaning, as the figures in a Chancellor's Budget. My excuse is just this. Amongst my most vivid memories of fifty years' association with India are those of the appalling consequences of famine. Arriving when the failure of the rains in 1896 was passing, and seeing the consequences in the Bombay Deccan, I can recall the agony with which we watched the feeble monsoon current in August and September of 1899, asking day in, day out, whether the indraught of the rain-bearing currents from the south-west would be strong enough to moisten the sun-baked fields of Western and Central India, of Rajputana and the Punjab. When they failed, I spent toilsome months in the stricken areas, and perhaps two experiences will drive the lesson home.

In the small town of Udaipur, capital of the Rajput State of that name, the cholera deaths were four hundred a day. In one of the lesser districts of Gujarat, when the epidemic swept like a tornado across the relief works, fifteen hundred dead were burnt in three days. Then when the rains came malaria spread like a plague over a people worn by strain and hunger until they died in myriads. With this acid experience, such time as could be spared from the wrangle of politics was passed amongst the engineers. Standing at the headworks of the Lower Chenab Canal at Khanki and steaming for hours amid the lush wheatfields of the Punjab between Wazirabad and Multan—the flow of the Chenab at Khanki is six times that of the Thames at Teddington—or spending happy days with the men who saved the Bombay Deccan from periodic scarcity, my heart has sung with gratitude to these wise and courageous compatriots; their work is good and will endure.

The British engineer in India, however, had one defect: like Lord Roberts, he did not advertise. Of a thousand of our people, who knows something of the Assuan Dam, and of Great Boulder, Grand Coulee and Muscle Shoals; who has any concept of the Sukkur Barrage, which, controlling and distributing the waters of the mighty Indus, brings under irrigation an area as large as the whole irrigated area of Egypt;

of the Bhatgar Dam on the Nira which contains more masonry than the Assuan; of the imagination which turned the flow of the Periyar from its natural outlet into the Arabian Sea, where it was wasted, eastward into the Bay of Bengal, fertilizing a huge area on its new course? Most striking of all, the insight of Wilson and Jacob, who planned to bring the surplus waters of the Jhelum across river and canal to the Lower Bari Doab? Perhaps another reminiscence will be forgiven. When I was directing the Government of India's war publicity, the Minister in charge of Public Works sent me the outline of the irrigation report—then a dreary assembly of the most arid statistics—in a new form and asked for advice. It was uncompromising; the new form embodied every possible defect; what was needed was a graphic description of the great works and their history in handy book form which should be revised at intervals of three or five years, the statistics being published annually. For once seed did not fall on stony Secretariat ground; the right penman was found in D. G. Harris; and an arresting history of Indian irrigation was published in 1923 by the Oxford University Press. If there is a later edition it is not to be found and a single well-worn copy lies "interred" in the library of the Commonwealth Relations Office.

It is an entrancing story. Before settled government was established the engineers got to work. Naturally, they first turned attention to such remains of past enterprise as they found. Cotton remodelled the Grand Anicut on the Cauvery in Madras, and so demonstrated what could be done by modern skill. The Jumna was taken in hand; that river was first tapped in the fourteenth century to bring water to the Emperor's hunting lodge, and in 1568 by Akbar to meet the needs of Imperial Delhi. It had fallen into decay until, remodelled and extended, by 1873 it had been raised to the status of a major work. If some of the many who, visiting Delhi, wander round the monuments of the Moghul sovereigns—Humayun's tomb, the Kutb Minar and the Purana Kila—or gaze in admiration at Lutyens's Viceroy's House, would spend an hour in visiting the adjacent head-works of the Jumna Canal, they would see whence the abound-

ing crops they have observed on the last stage of their railway journey from Muttra to Delhi derive their life-blood, and win at least a nodding acquaintance with the irrigation engineer.

Pre-eminent in these early enterprises was that of Probyn Cautley on the Ganges Canal, the first entirely new and big scheme taken in hand. Undeterred by war, pestilence and shortage of funds, Cautley and his colleagues pushed this through, and it was finished in 1862. Even after the lapse of nearly a century this may still be classed amongst the greatest feats of irrigation engineering in India; the Solani aqueduct of fifteen arches, each with a fifty-foot span, stands as one of the most magnificent irrigation works ever constructed.

Until recently, in any event, there remained on the canal a modest dwelling known as "Willcocks's Bungalow." This was the abode of the father of those three remarkable men—William, whose dynamic energy made possible the construction of the Assuan Dam against every conceivable obstruction; James, the soldier; Ernest, of the Public Works. India can peculiarly claim William, for he got his training at Rurkee; Ernest was a Cooper's Hill man, and had as his bent architecture. Of course, serving in India, after one satisfactory building, the Anjuman-i-Islam Institute in Bombay, he was always otherwise employed, but he found one last opportunity, when supervising the new broad-gauge route from Bombay to Delhi, in the happy design of the stations on the Nagda-Muttra line.

Another digression. Voyaging from Basra to Karachi, I had as fellow-passenger William Willcocks, returning from his preliminary survey of the irrigation possibilities in Mesopotamia. His eyes kindled as he said: "From any vantage point the whole of the early system of works is spread like a map before you." That granary of tradition, it is true, perished when the eruption of Ghengiz Khan wrecked the headworks—a legend not without its significance. His eyes kindled again when he described how he found the son of Mughal Bey, the author of the Rosetta Dam which Scott Moncrieff rescued from neglect, incidentally saving the Egyptian Government an annual charge of £200,000 a year for a pumping station and

Mughal Bey himself from obscure poverty—the story is told in Milner's vivid *England in Egypt*—seeking to close a breach in the Euphrates. In that soft, stoneless soil no ordinary measures suffice to hold a flood; brick towers were erected on either side of the breach and at a given moment blown up so that the mass fell into the gap. Mughal Bey's son had failed. "Build up your towers and try again," cried Willcocks. "If you fail, try again and again. Oh, to see these waters spreading over the dry and arid land, if it is only for an hour!" Then one realized the irresistible energy which triumphed over all obstructions—the archæologists who denounced the drowning of the temples of Philæ, the Faint Hearts and the Doubters—and set Egypt still more firmly on the path of the prosperity she ought to be enjoying.

It is well-nigh impossible for us in these more settled days, with an immeasurable improvement in communications, to appreciate the difficulties which beset the early engineers. No Ronald Ross had arisen to denounce the mosquito as the evil factor in malaria; no Haffkine had discovered the anti-cholera prophylactic; these twin dangers were the nightmare of the constructor. Nor had the American engineers who, raising the levees of the Mississippi, developed the steam shovel and the drag-line excavator.

Nothing could illustrate this better than conditions in which the Periyar dam was raised. The country was uninhabited and covered with dense jungle and the nearest railway was ninety miles distant. Malaria reached appalling proportions and during a single year—1895—the average number of labourers was 2,449; the average monthly hospital attendance, 1,081. Masons were almost impossible to procure, and as the historian of the work wrote: "Any ambitious coolie who could borrow or steal a pair of old boots and a trowel presented himself unblushingly for the job." Yet, generally speaking, the quality of the masonry was first-class. And the results? It rendered one of the most precarious tracts in Madras practically free from want and a hundred and seventy-six thousand acres were provided with an unfailing supply of water.

But, it must be confessed, progress to this stage was spasmodic; indeed, in the 'sixties the untrammelled imagination

of Cotton, with the glamour of the Grand Anicut attaching to his name, led vast projects under joint-stock-company management into grievous errors, with disastrous consequences to the investors, and the final conclusion that major irrigation works were a matter for Government Agency. It remained for Lord Curzon, as one of the twelve tasks he set himself on assuming the Viceroyalty, to create a plan, and, in its permanent benefits none of his activities was more fruitful than the calling of Scott Moncrieff to preside over an Irrigation Commission. It began its inquiries in the nick of time.

The Punjab was a paradise for the irrigation engineer. Elsewhere, in the cultivated tracts, the water when provided had to be distributed amongst a multitude of petty holdings; the Punjab desert, or Crown Waste tracts as they were called, had no resident population beyond a few nomads who eked out a precarious existence as graziers; the land could be parcelled out into neat rectangles; hand-picked cultivators imported from the congested districts to find everything ready for their labour except building the villages. Some experience of the possibilities of canal colonization was gleaned from the smallish Lower Sohagmara and Sidhnai canals, and then its tremendous possibilities burst on the administrative world from the astonishing fruits of the Lower Chenab works. These served a tract of extreme desolation. Water lay for the most part from eighty to a hundred and twenty feet below the surface of the soil, whilst the rainfall was scanty and uncertain. With the exception of snakes and lizards, the country was extraordinarily devoid of animal life; the vegetation consisted of dusty shrubs; grazing there was none; the only inhabitants were hardy nomads. The canal converted this wilderness into a garden and at the peak earned forty-five per cent on the capital cost of £3¼ millions.

Naturally the engineers asked for more. They looked on the Lower Bari Doab—the country between the Ravi and the Sutlej—and cast covetous eyes on the waters of the Sutlej; a scheme for their use was prepared. Wilson and Jacob protested; this would mean that the surplus waters of the Jhelum could never be utilized, whilst the Sutlej would be wanted for the lands on both sides of that river. They prevailed, and from

their foresight and wisdom sprang one of the most dramatic imaginative schemes in the history of engineering.

The Upper Jhelum Canal carries the waters of that river into the Chenab, thus feeding the Lower Chenab Canal; the Chenab water so freed is turned into the Upper Chenab Canal; then this canal was constructed southwards to the Ravi, which it passed by a level-crossing below which it is known as the Lower Bari Doab Canal. John Benton, it is understood, was prepared to cross the Ravi by syphons, but even the daring Punjab engineers boggled at the possibilities of a breakdown and the novel medium of a level-crossing was adopted. This triple scheme ranks as one of the biggest works in the world, with 433 miles of main canals and branches, commanding 6,250 square miles of land, much of it formerly waste; and for the first time 2,500 square miles were brought under the plough. Surely even more striking than these remarkable results is the disciplined imagination which conceived the idea of taking command of the surplus waters in the Jhelum in the north and carrying it over canal and river and water-courses innumerable to the dry lands in the distant south.

What of the waters of the Sutlej, literally snatched from the maw of the Punjab? There the problem was complicated. It aimed at regularizing the service of the inundation canals on either side of the river in the Punjab and the Indian State of Bahawalpur and in addition a vast area of perennial irrigation. The engineering difficulties were not great; the political serious. How was the water to be allocated between the Punjab and the Indian States of Bikaner and Bahawalpur? To and fro the ball was tossed. My honoured friend, the late Maharajah of Bikaner, looking on his huge desert territory and the fertile lands which needed only water to make them blossom, grew grey with anxiety as the years passed and no solution was found. At last an allocation was agreed, and even then its equities were doubtful; Bahawalpur was awarded more water than it could profitably use and the other partners went short. However, it was done; with four weirs and twelve canals this vied with the Triple Project in magnitude. This ranks with the greatest major works, commanding nearly eight thousand square miles, and, what was of even more

## THE WORK THAT ENDURETH

importance, some four million acres of desert waste. The scheme was suggestive, because it introduced the lined canal.

The Punjab Government had long looked enviously to the prospect of the lined canal, permitting smaller channels with a high velocity and preventing seepage, and went to the point of participating in the establishment of cement works so as to secure an adequate supply of concrete. It was put into operation in the section functioning in Bikaner State, ninety miles of lined canal, the longest, it is understood, in the world. Accustomed to the vast channels in the Punjab and Sind, some of which make the Suez Canal look small, it was a revelation to stand at the delivery point of the Sutlej in Bikaner and mark the swift-flowing current pouring down its narrow width; so successful was the work that the Maharajah said if he had known earlier what the results would be all the distributories would have been lined as well. The lining of canals will loom big in the works of the future.

This brief survey—engineers will please note that it seeks to give no more than a picture, not a detailed statement for the expert—brings us to the crowning glory of the irrigation engineer, and the triumph of the Bombay Public Works Department. Bombay was rather the Cinderella of the irrigation movement; it could show nothing to compare with the great achievements of the Punjab, the United Provinces and Madras, for, although useful work was done on the Muthi and Nira rivers, the return was so small that it compared meagrely with the striking prosperity of the northern systems. Yet Bombay had its special urge in the Deccan, where it was said that the people expected one famine in every three years—and got it.

A new era opened when the Irrigation Commission produced an arresting formula. It estimated the annual cost of famine; then took that figure to justify the loss on any protective works which might be constructed. With this as a basis rapid progress was made. The Darna, Bhandardara and Bhatghar dams store and distribute waters which break the back of any failure of the south-west monsoon and bring permanent relief to the hardy but sorely tried Maratha peasantry. Incidentally, the Bhandardara masonry dam, 270 ft.

high, was the loftiest in the world when designed, though surpassed in America before completed, and the work at Bhatghar contained more masonry than any dam then built, not excluding that at Assuan. But these did not arrest the eye; that was left in the control of the mighty Indus at Sukkur.

How slowly the mills in India used to grind! Sind, part of the Bombay Presidency from its conquest in 1842 until its separation as a separate province under the Act of 1935, starved for want of water. With a precarious rainfall of five and a half inches a year, vast areas of land classed as desert, but only needing water to become fertile, it always had partial use of the Indus through inundation canals flowing uncertainly when the melting of the snows in Kashmir brought down torrents in a mighty flood. These were extended year by year on a humble scale, always with the serious handicap of uncertainty; the cultivator never knew when he sowed his crop whether there would be water enough to bring it to maturity. At best, inundation permitted only a four months' crop, with its demoralizing result in poor cultivation, laziness and crime.

As long ago as 1855, Fife, whose work at Khadakwasla, near Poona, still stands a monument to his constructive efficiency, prepared a scheme not markedly different from that finally approved, but Fife was three-quarters of a century in advance of his time, and how furiously the heathen—the dissident engineers—raged! Every possible obstacle was raised—a barrage was unnecessary, the Indus would change its channel, as it has many times in its history, and what not; and over all these controversies one stark fact prevailed—either Sind must use the water or others would.

Controversy should have ceased when Arnold Musto produced a plan so complete, so convincing in 1916 that it arrested the imagination; it was a comprehensive project to include the barrage, with four perennial canals on the left bank, and two perennial canals and one large kharif canal for rice on the right. Even then faction would not have been stilled but for two factors—the Punjab was not content to stand and gaze even if Bombay did, and there was a scheme for the damming of the Indus at Kalabagh; and the dynamic



energy of Lord Lloyd, then Governor of Bombay Presidency. When work was commenced in 1923 a remarkable team was mustered under the direction of Charlton Harrison, who showed a prescient capacity for planning and direction, with Musto in charge of the barrage and its protective works and Mould of the canals.

There were anxious moments, especially when an exceptional flood threatened to overtop the coffer-dam which covered an area of forty-nine acres, but the work went steadily forward to its opening in 1932, one of the few in history which was completed within the revised estimate. It is almost impossible to realize the magnitude of this titanic enterprise; the total length of the canals is 6,816 miles, the excavation reached 6,100 millions of cubic feet of soil, whilst three of the main canals are much wider than the Suez Canal, and each carries continuously about the same volume of water as the Thames at high flood.

The Sukkur works have another distinctive character. Earlier construction was through manpower—not a force to be sneezed at, as the Americans recently found when they sought to close the breach on the Yellow River in China; the engineer went forth into the desert with his eighty-pound tent and skeleton staff, and the labour force and the sub-contractor followed. The coolie, with his broad-bladed *powrah*,<sup>1</sup> filled the basket between his feet, and the donkey with his panniers and the woman with her freight on her head climbed the ramps until the channel was cut and the banks raised. At Sukkur the drag-line excavator and steam-shovel came into operation and fifty-five per cent of the excavation was done by machinery.

These gigantic works have been a marked success, and are now to be completed by a barrage lower down the river to feed the other inundation canals. Finally, with the great dam at Mettur, which rounds off the irrigation system in Madras, the heroic age of engineering under the British Raj was passed. Not quite; all engineers know that it is one thing to bring

<sup>1</sup> *Powrah*: a kind of mattock, with the blade set at an angle on the haft to enable the man using it to draw towards him the soil he has loosened.

the water to the land, and another to take it off; the Indian cultivator is prodigal in his lush waterings, and water-logging, bringing the salts in the soil to the surface and destroying its fertility, is one of the many nightmares of the Public Works Officer. Less is known of the ingenuity of William Stampe in the Ganges Valley in sinking tube wells in the alluvium and raising the subsoil water by electric pumps drawing their energy from falls on the canal. There are some sixteen hundred of these wells, each of one and one-third cusecs yield, and they protect one and a half million acres, of which some eight hundred thousand are annually irrigated. This is only the beginning of developments of almost limitless extent.

In the spacious days of Cotton, whose imagination was untrammelled by any petty restrictions of cost and practicability, glowing prospects were held out of canals which would bridge India from east to west and north to south, navigable as well as bringing the deserts in. These dreams passed; after long interval we come to the most striking development of irrigation—the association of electricity with hydraulic engineering. Here, frankly, the British entrepreneur has lagged behind. The first step was in Mysore, and the inspiring genius, Lotbiniere, one of the many products of that fine school of engineering, Kingston, in Canada. The conditions were ideal: a big drop on the Cauvery and a perennial supply, with a ready-made demand at the Kolar Goldfields, ninety-two miles distant. Begun in 1902, that modest scheme has expanded to forty-two thousand kilowatts. This fired the imagination of Jamsetji Tata in Bombay, where the need was no less urgent.

The coal supplies of India are for all practical purposes located in the north-east, and the great textile industry of the city was dependent for its fuel either on Britain or Natal, and later on Indian mines involving a rail haul of over a thousand miles, or the rail-cum-sea route via Calcutta, with a double break in bulk. Yet all the time there was waiting to be harnessed in the Western Ghata, with its rainfall of three hundred to six hundred inches, and a steep fall of eighteen hundred feet, sufficient power to meet all emergencies.

British capital, ready enough to embark on wild-cat schemes

in South America, was timid and shy; the project, even with a guaranteed offtake, was hawked round London and no takers. It was with no little trepidation that it was finally launched shortly before the war with Indian capital, and there has been no turning back. The three separate works—the Tata Hydro-electric, the Andhra Valley and the Tata Power—all with the same character, storage of the monsoon rainfall and its conversion into electrical energy at the foot of the hills—with their two hundred and fifteen thousand kilowatts, are taxed to the full, and Bombay is one of the most completely electrified cities in the world. Not only are its mills driven by electricity, but the distributing company—the Bombay Electric Supply and Tramways Company, now taken over by the Municipality—bore on its books many thousands of consumers whose bills were only a few shillings a month. Madras, with the same economic conditions as Bombay—a growing industry and remoteness from the coal-fields—was slower off the mark, but now has a growing electric grid, based mainly on the stations at Pykara, Mettur and Papanasan, of thirty thousand kilowatts, with potential resources estimated at two hundred and twenty thousand kilowatts.

Owing to the extension of irrigation the Punjab passed in the lifetime of a single generation from a poor province with a congested rural population into the relatively most progressive area in India, with an energetic and adventurous population. But the Punjab is desperately short of fuel, and boldly tackled its needs with the Uhl Valley works. Like the Triple Irrigation Scheme, these were of an imaginative and adventurous character, for the head-works are in the remote Kangra Valley, and they demanded fifteen thousand feet of tunnel through friable rock which nearly turned the hair of the engineers grey. But, if costly, they are of the most beneficial character, for they distribute forty-eight thousand kilowatts of electrical energy over an area destitute of fuel other than wood through a transmission system which is said to cover an area as large as the grid of Britain.

What of the results and what of the future? Britain, through its engineers, has bequeathed to India eighty thousand miles of canals, fertilizing seventy million acres of

land previously largely desert, and today thirty-one per cent of the Punjab, eighteen per cent of the United Provinces, and nineteen per cent of Sind are irrigated, and this in a country which before was entirely dependent on the monsoon rains, which induced appalling destitution, loss and suffering when they failed, bringing not only starvation, but disease in their train.

The future? First look at the inescapable problems which have to be faced. The new responsible governments—India and Pakistan—have to grapple with the most tremendous situation which has ever confronted any administrations. Slowly there are emerging from the din of politics the stark realities. The population is four hundred and ten millions, increasing at the rate of five millions a year.

If space permitted it would be a fascinating task to trace the forces which have induced a population increase which was manageable until 1911, or perhaps 1921, to these appalling proportions. How is this population to be kept alive, much less raised from a deplorably low living standard, especially when the exports of Burma rice, which used to furnish a balancing reservoir of two million tons, will not be fully available for years, if ever. Food, and yet more food, is the insistent cry, because population growth is like a glacier—its progress cannot be arrested, except possibly over generations. Never was the air so full of gigantic projects, which seem to take no account of crores of rupees, or a demand on the engineering resources of the world.

We may be assured that all major works in future will be carried out through Government agency, and departmentally rather than through contractors, and that every irrigation project will be linked with the generation of hydro-electric energy, distributed through expanding grids. The administrative machinery to these ends has already been set up. Moreover, all these projects presuppose the establishment of strong governments, and a supply of capital far transcending anything raised in the past.

Surveying this ambitious programme, the schemes which are most likely to come to early fruition are the Bhakra dam and the Damodher Valley project. The Bhakra dam is an old

friend of thirty years, and is hedged in by the allocation of the waters between the Provinces and States affected. It comprises a dam 480 ft. high across a gorge in the River Sutlej, with 220 miles of lined canals, commanding 4.5 million acres and a potential of 160,000 kilowatts of electric energy at a cost of Rs. 42 crores.

The Damodher scheme is based on the lines of the T.V.A. and is of the most comprehensive character. It is designed to take control of the Damodher, which rises in Chota Nagpur and falls into the Hughli thirty miles below Calcutta; it aims at the complete control of the floods, the provision of 300,000 kilowatts of electric energy and the command of 760,000 acres, with facilities for navigation, at a cost of Rs. 55 crores. Owing to their special experience of high dams, and of the T.V.A., American engineers have been called in, and it is announced that they are opening permanent offices in India. At the moment every Provincial Government—and these Provincial Governments are as large as States—is bursting with constructive energy; and given stable administration, a sufficient supply of capital, and the necessary machinery, the activities of the future will make even the great achievements of the past seem almost insignificant.

Inevitably, in a desperately thirsty land, the irrigation engineer has dominated the scene; but the railway constructor is entitled to his paeon. Every time I have passed up and down the Western Ghats, now electrified, I have never failed to admire the bold men who carried the lines over the Thul and Bhore passes, generally following the course of the old military roads, and with gradients almost inconceivable in those days. A passing tribute to their foresight. When owing to the growth of traffic it was necessary to replace the old reversing stations by direct transit, the final plans were almost identical with those of the first surveyors. Few, save those on duty bent, know of the Hurnai route to Quetta, and how the engineers wrestled with the intractable Mud Gorge, and then turned to the steep Bolan, with the Khojak Tunnel which the Amir of Afghanistan said was a knife thrust into his vitals.

One could a tale unfold of the last span in the Hardinge Bridge, just dropped into place before the floods came down,

but that is familiar to all who know their India; one would like to write of the successful training works which laid the bogey of changes in the courses of the great rivers, without which dams and bridges might have been left high and dry; but that is another story.

Ships pass in the night. Cotton, Cautley, Wilson, Jacob, Harrison, Hill and Beale, these are hardly names today. In how few years will they be forgotten? Their works will stand for evermore. Behind them have stood those great firms of consulting engineers, constantly refreshed by partners with recent Indian experience, who fortified the designers with their world experience. Surveying the scene, what time Britain has remitted her control of the sub-continent to Indian hands, we are proud to think how few mistakes were made, how permanent their handiwork; the engineers have stamped on Indian soil those qualities which we like to think are inherent in the British way of life—disciplined imagination, solidity of construction, and a tenacity which refused to be discouraged by any obstacle.

## THE FERMENT OF PARLIAMENT

INTO PARLIAMENT HE SHALL GO.  
"THE WORD 'POLITIC' SURPRISES BY HIMSELF"  
*Count Smorltork*

THE INDIAN SCENE moved to Westminster. We have it on the authority of Mr. Kipling that there are five and twenty ways of constructing tribal lays and every single one of them is right. There may be five and twenty ways of entering Parliament, but of these I can write of only one—the manner I experienced.

What are the forces which draw men and women into politics? Ambition? Only a tiny percentage can hope to exercise any real influence on affairs: Lord Rosebery was right when he urged his countrymen to concentrate on local government, for then they could see some result from their handiwork. Vanity? Politics are heady wine; there is a glamour in the public meeting; in the cheering crowd on election day; in the knowledge that when speaking in the Commons chamber one is in the forum which heard the thunders of Chatham and the silver voice of Gladstone. Interest? Of course there are some who make a good thing out of politics, but they are very few and far between. Yet there is the magnet and it will draw men and women as long as the British constitution stands.

Lord Morley first directed my attention to politics. In India I had declined to take any direct part in the municipality or in the legislative council, on the principle that the editor of a newspaper should stand aloof from direct participation in local affairs and politics. In my last interview with him when he was still Secretary of State for India he exclaimed: "You and I who have controlled great newspapers know far more of history and the art of government than the general run of

members, yet our opinions are brushed aside because we are not practical business men." The iron had entered his soul because he was classed in the language of one of the very high-up ones as belonging to the category of "writin' fellers."

The first suggestion that I should stand for Parliament came by a strange chance from Mr. Arthur Henderson. We were all members of the British delegation to the League of Nations in the historic session of 1924, and Henderson had striven with immense earnestness for the famous protocol. When that came before the Assembly, Lord Hardinge, who was leading the Indian delegation, turned to me and asked: "Do you think this is going through?" "Not on your life, my lord. This is as dead as mutton; as cold as mutton fat; Parliament will never consent to putting the British Navy at the disposal of the League."

We were sitting at meat with the Maharajah of Bikaner, and Henderson asked if I had thought of entering into politics. "Like others," I told him, "in a dilettante fashion." "If you think more of it, come and see us and something may be arranged." "Mr. Henderson, I am afraid I am on the other side. I cannot agree with your programme of nationalization and the capital levy, for neither is suited to the genius and conditions of the British people." The next urge came from a very different source. A Cabinet Minister holding high office in the Conservative Government repeated Henderson's question, and perhaps I was a little malicious. "Sir William, I have thought of it, but my difficulty is this. All my working life I have had a certain credo; my natural affiliations are with the Labour Party, but I cannot swallow nationalization and the capital levy." "Good heavens," he burst out, "if you can stomach everything else cannot you stomach that?" Which invited the retort: "Can you tell me what the faith of the Conservative Party is?" He turned to his neighbour and spoke to this lost soul no more; clearly he had never thought out what the Conservative philosophy was. It was Sir Walter Lawrence who made up my mind. He was the *guru* who had guided me on many of my Indian adventures; he roundly insisted that I should play my part in the political field, and



finished by saying that he should send in my name to Bain who was then the head of the Conservative organization. So in due course came the invitation to discuss the possibility with the Chief Agent, Bain having retired.

Those were the bad old days for a Conservative candidate. The first question was not whether I was competent, but how much I was prepared to spend on the election. Calculating the extent of my bank overdraft, the figure was agreed at £500 a year. This vitally important consideration settled, would I consider contesting Stourbridge? I would, and so the caravan moved on. But it was illuminating to learn how little of politics and history a Chief Agent, possibly a master of election technique, could know. This was in 1927 and the certainty of a general election in 1929 dominated the horizon. "Chief Agent," I asked, "what is your forecast of the issue of the election?" The estimate was that the Conservatives could not have a majority less than sixty. "Well, you may be right, and you have a detailed knowledge which I cannot claim, but do you realize how rare have been the occasions in the records of politics when the retiring Government has secured a good working majority? The great exception was in 1900, when the Conservatives and Unionists triumphed at the khaki election. The sequel was striking—it led to the Conservative debacle of 1906. Every Government must make enemies and disappoint friends, and the middle vote, which decides elections, is generally cast against the Government of the day, if for no other reason because of the inclination of the electors to give the other fellows a chance."

So to Stourbridge I went. This was new ground. Stourbridge was a pretty good sample of the industrial midlands. In Stourbridge itself were the fine glass-works whose crystal products are known all over the world. Originally founded by immigrants from depressed Bohemia, they have held their own, though entirely dependent on imported material. It was an active centre for the making of the enamelled pots and pans generically described as hollow-ware. The chain-making industry was well established, though the automatic machine had ousted handwork for the small links and the big chain cables were hammered out over the border. The division

embraced a bit of Cradley Heath, of evil industrial memory; and there survived just one example of the harsh phases of the industrial revolution—husband and wife working at the anvil in a shed at the back of the house, turning out the hooks which hold up iron gaspipes. In the heart of the constituency was a branch of the great Stewart and Lloyds' combination for the production of hundreds of miles of steel tubes for which there was an insatiable appetite; and the Halesowen Forge which, with steel brought from Sheffield or Scotland, supplied the Admiralty with propeller shafts and stern posts. At the far end the division ran into the outskirts of Birmingham at Oldbury, where the tube works of Accles and Pollock, the chemical works of Albright and Wilson and the glass products of Chance Brothers had their being.

Stourbridge was really a microcosm of industrial Britain. Founded on the craftsmanship of the chain and glass workers—it was said that give a man a hammer and a bit of iron and steel and he would fashion whatever was demanded—it had expanded into this half-dozen powerful corporations; but in essentials it remained the theatre of the individual worker with many of the limitations of the enterprising workman. It was a Liberal constituency, so long held by one of the Wilson family that it was regarded as a pocket borough. When Wilson lost his seat to an adventurous crippled soldier he could not believe the counting was correct; and after the glamour of the wounded hero passed with death in came Labour, well dug in. The Conservative cause was really held together by one self-sacrificing individual, Sidney Law, who gave freely of his time and money to it, backed by an enthusiastic band of women. On a dull, depressing day Law drove me round the division and at the end of the tour asked what I thought about it. "It is five to one against the best man you can get, but I am willing to take it on for the experience." For that decision there was no cause for regret.

It was a good fight. Lucky in so many other respects, I was particularly fortunate in my opponents. The sitting member, Wilfred Wellock, was a theoretical Socialist; Finnemore brought to the Liberal flag great moral earnestness and a fanatical belief in the merits of free imports which had to be

heard to be believed; and a Conservative creed beyond getting the other fellow out had to be invented.

My own faith was that of Joseph Chamberlain, who I maintain was the greatest statesman of his generation. What he did for his native city of Birmingham stands four-square in all that is best in that varied hive; none who recalls his days can forget the thrill which went round the Empire when he took the Colonial Office into his strong hands; and if ever history is fairly writ the conclusion must be that two great misfortunes which befell the Commonwealth were the insistence on the abolition of the shilling registration duty on corn—the first faint beginnings of a great policy of Imperial preference by a dull Chancellor of the Exchequer whose name none can remember—and the illness which struck Chamberlain down at the height of the tariff-reform controversy. My own belief in Imperial preference and a discriminating tariff had never weakened and that was our uncompromising platform.

What an uphill struggle it was! The shadow of the depressions of the 'twenties hung over the constituency with a melancholy volume of unemployment. Nothing would convince Liberals and Labourites that an industrial area with no special natural resources could not stand against free imports in products where labour was the chief item in costs, not even the spectacle of Swedish hollow-ware being unloaded in crates at the doors of the factory which was on half-time or worse. The legacy of the General Strike of 1926, and the long paralysis of the coal-mining which followed, had induced a big flow of foreign steel so inferior that it was called "frozen iron." Still nothing would shake the blind, unreasoning faith in what was called free trade; manufacturers would see themselves ruined like some of the steel magnates of the north-east rather than confess themselves wrong, and the trade-union leaders would watch their followers degenerate on exiguous unemployment pay rather than admit the error of their ways. But we did not do so badly!

Conservative candidates went down like ninepins all over the midlands, and Stourbridge was one of the few industrial divisions where the Party improved its position.

It is often said that the defeated candidate has no friends.

That is not always true. It is a happy memory still to count many friends in the Stourbridge area and an assured welcome on occasions there. There was a tempting invitation to stand for the Division again, but it had to be put aside. This was really a seat for a local man, as was urged on the Party again and again. This was also a constituency for an association of the Liberals with the Conservatives, because the figures disclosed by the poll made it clear that divided they gave the representation to Labour on a plate; but free trade stood in the path. The prospect was that at an expense of round about a thousand pounds a year one was assured of a sound beating at the next election, for none could then foresee the landslide of 1931. Even that would not have been dismaying, but for the factor of distance; Stourbridge was ninety miles from my home in the Chilterns, and though there must be under our electoral system carpet-baggers, that aspect of politics made no appeal.

Tempting suggestions came from other quarters, and a very attractive one from Portsmouth Central. This nice, compact Division was a picnic in comparison with Stourbridge, with never more than one meeting an evening and none on the eve of the poll; it was reckoned a quiet day in the midlands when there were fewer than five meetings. But there was the recollection of a wise Chief Whip: "Never accept a London constituency; they are too impersonal. Nor a dock-yard division; they are the most uncertain of all, and the candidate or member is beset with questions of pay and pension."

Life was pleasant. Eight months in Britain, with a sufficiency of political activity as a member of the Party executive and then vice-chairman; three months in Bombay during a season when it has the finest climate in the world, with business interests not too exacting and not unprofitable, and a welcome from old associates which was manna in the wilderness. A wit said of Ireland that it was a land where the impossible always happened and the inevitable never occurred. The most remote possibility was that the mid-Bucks seat would fall vacant; but the French proverb proved true—everything comes to him who knows how to wait. In the autumn of 1937 the sitting member desired to retire; he was out of

harmony with the Party and its policies; but would not go unless I agreed to take his place. Of course, that was for the Party to decide; he clinched his decision to retire; the Party asked me to contest the seat; and the bye-election was fought in the following May. It has so chanced that in three elections it was always when the fortunes of the Conservative Party were at a low ebb; five bye-elections running had gone against it; and Douglas Hacking came to Aylesbury with a worried look to inquire into our prospects. He returned to London smiling broadly and his confidence was justified. There was a strong Liberal candidate in Athol Robertson, a determined seat-hunter, who fought election after election on an outmoded land-tax platform with no greater reward than a few weeks in the House of Commons. Reginald Groves had literally stormed up and down the constituency in the Labour interest, and he and Robertson were so busy attacking each other that they ignored the miserable worm of a Conservative candidate; and we had a victory only a few hundreds below the high-water mark of the General Election. It was pleasant, if not convincing, to be billed at bye-elections in the following months, in places as far apart as Lancashire, Yorkshire and Derbyshire, as the man who stopped the rot.

Guy Fawkes apart, how many members enter the House of Commons with good intentions? But before considering intentions, a word in season to the new member who comes in on a bye-election. For a few brief moments he is the cynosure of all eyes. The House is fairly crowded at the end of Questions. He is jealously scanned as he stands at the Bar, and then, with his sponsors, marches solemnly to the table and presents his writ of election to the Chief Clerk. What sort of blighter is the newcomer? A little stage management is no bad introduction. For instance, it is not impressive if Mr. X, height five feet nothing, is sponsored by Mr. Julian Snow, six feet six or more. Captain Margesson claimed his right as Chief Whip; Sir Edward Grigg fathered me on the other side; we were all three within an inch or so of six feet. If I had been younger, or shyer, I might have felt embarrassed when an audible voice from the Labour benches was heard to say: "Well, he won't be here long." Then half an hour with the

Prime Minister in his room behind the Speaker's chair when I was able to assure him that the election was fought and won on his policies, and not least on the foreign policy he was resolutely pursuing.

Presumably everyone who enters Parliament has ambitions which, like Sam Weller's knowledge of London, are extensive and peculiar. My own were of the most modest. I was too old, time was too short, to nourish any hope of office even of the most minor character, apart from the fact that being a journalist *de facto* one was unfit for any responsible employment. But I had three hopes. One that I might be able to take some useful part in financial discussions. That was soon abandoned; as a good friend on the Labour benches remarked: "You and I are the only remaining orthodox financiers in the House, and orthodox finance is drowned by preparations for war." Sound finance was summed up once and for all time by that great economist, Wilkins Micawber: "Annual income £20, annual expenditure £19 19s. 6d.—result happiness. Annual income £20, annual expenditure £20 0s. 6d.—result misery."

No suggestion of economy in expenditure evoked the slightest response, yet looking back there is compensation in the thought that my maiden speech was made in protest against extravagance; that I pressed on the Chancellor the folly of fixing the excess profits tax as low as sixty per cent, which invited the Labour demand of a hundred per cent as the price of entering the National Government, and no financial expedient was more productive of waste; and to the end warned the Labour Ministry that the persistent refusal to recognize the necessity of economy was imperilling the very thing they love—the security of the welfare state. I hoped to secure in Parliament some understanding of the hopes and ambitions of the Indian peoples. As an ancillary activity there was the faint ambition to do something to clear up the law of defamation, which had developed into an open scandal, paralysing the responsible Press in its duty to expose abuses and exercise its right of free criticism.

There is great element of luck in parliamentary life. One of the most cherished rights of the private member is the oppor-

## THE FERMENT OF PARLIAMENT

tunity of bringing in a Bill on his own to remedy a grievance or to advance a cause which he has at heart. There is a continuous struggle between the Government of the day and the back-bencher; the private member seeks to do something practical to justify the years he spends at Westminster, the Government to filch the time given to this business in order to press through its own programme. In this, especially in the case of new parliaments, when so many of the private members do not appreciate the value of the opportunities which the Standing Orders offer them, the Government wins; but this is a privilege which the Commons should never forgo.

At the opening of each session there is a ballot for the right of presenting private Bills, and no small excitement when the result of the draw is known. As it is entirely a matter of chance, the Whips roam the lobbies with skeleton Bills in case the successful are not forearmed, and colleagues dance round with their own drafts in the hope that someone who has a place and has no special measure tucked away in his portfolio will adopt their ideas. Because, and this is important, the nature of the Bill—it need be no more than the short title with the names of the backers—must be deposited with the Clerk at the Tables very soon after the ballot. The right has definite limitations. No private Bill has any prospect of becoming law if it deals with a very controversial subject, nor unless the Government of the day either supports it or gives facilities for its passage. The most conspicuous example of the successful private Bill is Sir Alan Herbert's Act for the modification of the law of divorce; one is tempted to write "reform" instead of modification, but in operation has not that Act brought something very like Judge Lindley's suggestion for the companionate marriage? Let this pass; there are on the statute book a goodly number of measures useful in their scope, but not of such major importance that an over-worked government was ready to take them up of its own volition.

The good fortune which has pursued me throughout life awaited me on this occasion. At the first ballot after I entered Parliament I secured a good place; moreover, I had a draft Bill ready—a Bill to amend the law of defamation. Alan

Herbert was working on parallel lines; he approached the subject from the standpoint of the author, trembling under the shadow of the notorious Artemus Jones's case; I from the standpoint of harassed newspaper editor. We pooled our resources and presented a joint Bill.

There is nothing in our jurisprudence quite so arresting as the expansion of the law of defamation. Under the rulings of successive courts a stage was reached when almost anything could be construed into defamation. Dodson and Fogg were dead, very dead; but Smellfungus and Co. were very much alive; there was a new profession—the searching of the newspapers day by day in the hope of finding something actionable, and then goading the aggrieved person into an action on the understanding no damages no costs. The abuse had attained such proportions that one big combine maintained a highly competent lawyer with a staff for the sole purpose of handling these claims. The bane of the law of defamation was its uncertainty. No one could forecast how the minds of judge and jury would work; whilst I had no personal grievance, for in my seventeen years of editorship *The Times of India* never paid a penny in costs, the co-proprietors urged me never to take legal advice on matters of libel but to act on my own judgment, because legal advice was generally wrong—a heavy responsibility, but it worked.

Some of the cases which came into Court were fantastic. Heavy damages were given without any proof of damage sustained; suits were instituted as a gamble, and often had to be compromised because if successfully resisted there was no chance of recovering the costs. Here are two. In a suit of great public importance everything hinged on the bent of the judge's mind—would he take an academic or a constructive view of a plea of justification. The costs ran into tens of thousands of pounds and an adverse decision would have involved the ruin of the defendant. Here is another which came from a constituent. The defendant was lured in cross-examination into that extremely dangerous position, justification, though that was no part of the pleadings; he was cast in very heavy damages on grounds that the plaintiff was a man of unblemished character; he had been in jail more than



once for obtaining money by false pretences, but this could not be proved at the time.

Alan Herbert and I had an overwhelming case. We were able to show that the law of defamation had not been revised since 1888, though there had been a revolution in publishing. Newspaper circulations had vastly expanded; books and papers poured from the presses in increasing numbers; and broadcasting reached its millions of listeners. There was the dictum of Mr. Justice McCardie that large numbers of fraudulent and undesirable persons remain unexposed through the severity of the rules of law with respect to defendants in cases of defamation. "I know of the large trade that exists in seeking to extort damages from newspaper proprietors and others in circumstances which are little better than disguised blackmail." There was a shattering criticism from an even higher legal luminary that the law of defamation was the greatest instrument for the levying of blackmail on the statute book.

A generation has arisen which knows not Labouchere, nor the ceaseless campaign which he waged against financial "sharks" and unscrupulous moneylenders in the pages of *Truth*; he lived in days when the interpretation of defamation had not been developed to unheard-of proportions, otherwise even his fortune would have melted like a hailstone in the sun. The inquirer has only to compare the City articles of the big dailies with those of the 'nineties to appreciate how severely the critic, in exposing shady practices, is fettered by fear of colossal damages.

The main purpose of our little Bill was simple; it was to ensure that, subject to reasonable provision for the protection of the community, no damages should be given unless damage was proved and that no rogue should obtain damages and costs because under the rules his shady past could not be revealed. Now, frankly, the doctrine of "No damage proved, no damage awarded" cannot be pressed to its logical limits. Anyone can imagine cases where the reputation of a plaintiff can be prejudiced without any possible cash computation, and the offender in such instances should suffer; but surely that is using the civil law to punish, not to compensate, and the

offence is criminal, not civil; we could not carry the lawyers entirely with us on this issue.

The reception of this little Bill furnished one of the most painful experiences of my life. I had always been proud of my connexion with the newspaper Press and of my friendship with the able and high-minded men who were at the head of it. How startling it was to be told by colleagues in the House that in seeking to amend the law of defamation I was biting granite; that the Press was so unpopular that Parliament would not listen for a moment to any suggestion of giving it greater protection.

There was no attempt to counter the arguments which Alan Herbert and I put forward; no answer to the devastating legal *obiter dicta* which fortified the case for amendment. There was a serious effort to talk the Bill out. Fortunately, the Attorney-General took a wise and liberal view of his great office, and on the eve of the debate asked whether I would accept a Commission. If I might borrow from the impeccable Jane Austen on the only occasion when she relapsed into slang: "Would I?" There was no possible probable chance of getting through a measure of so complex a character as a private member's Bill; the Attorney-General accepted the main thesis, that the essential objects of the Bill were to make the law of libel respected as an instrument of justice and to remove the stigma that it is too often exploited for the purpose of gold-digging and disguised blackmail. He advised the House that the law did want an overhaul and consideration, and with this dictum it unanimously agreed to the setting up of a committee to consider the matter from a more fundamental and general point of view than amateurs could present.

True to the undertaking given by the Attorney-General, the Lord Chancellor set up a strong committee under Lord Porter to review the law of defamation in all its aspects. Ill-fortune dogged the work of that body; it set about its inquiry with despatch, but its sittings were inevitably suspended during the war and were not resumed until 1945. The report issued in September, 1948, embodied many valuable proposals both in the law and in the rules, not least in widening the

defence in pleas of justification and extending the field of privilege; if these had been speedily implemented in the amendment of the law and practice substantial progress would have accrued in scotching the gold-digger and increasing respect for the law. But a strange attack of *locomotor ataxy* seized the newspaper Press and authors; whether lulled into a sense of false security by the more reasonable estimate of damages taken by judges whilst cases were removed from the juries, or patting themselves on the back because Dodson and Fogg were dead, they must determine. Concerted action by those most nearly affected might have induced legislation in the House of Lords, but it was lacking; the temptation to exploit trifling grievances for profit is too great to encourage the belief that the legal shyster will not rise again. We had done our little best; and at least that closely reasoned and equitable Report will stand for the guidance of lawyers even if the law itself remains unamended.

The attitude of Parliament towards India often induced a feeling of despair. On major occasions, such as the passage of the Act of 1919 and its successor, the Act of 1935, it rose to the height of great responsibility. In the intervening years its temper was one of indifference. One was bound to ask what were the feelings of an Indian sitting in the gallery when Parliament discharged its statutory obligation to inquire into the moral and material progress of the land. The Secretary of State toiled through an uninspiring account of the events of the year. Someone on the Front Opposition Bench made a perfunctory reply.

There is before me a picture of the spokesman of the Great Imperial Party, clad in high collar and impeccable frock-coat, slapping the Moral and Material Progress Report—itself one of the most dismal blue-books until Professor Rushbrooke Williams took it in hand—and asking the dozen or two of members scattered over the benches why the Government did not give India the railways it needed instead of the education it did not want. Then the cranks and visionaries got to work, and at the end of the most boring day of the year the House rose with the feeling that, thank goodness, it is done and we are free to pursue our real business, say the misdeeds of the

local council of Mudfog-in-the-Hole. Nor was the country in any sense alive to its duties to the three hundred millions of people in the Eastern Dependency.

During the election of 1929 Lord Peel came to support my candidature in Stourbridge. He asked if I often spoke on India. "Only once," I advised him, "and that was to excite the retort from the body of the hall: 'That's where you pay the poor beggars fourpence a day.' " Only the word used was not beggars. Yet in that busy industrial area there was scarce a factory or a workshop which was not in part dependent on the Indian market. Small wonder then that a vehement Indian nationalist, after travelling up and down Britain, and finding ignorance and apathy on every hand, burst out: "If you will not take an intelligent interest in our affairs, then at least let us manage them ourselves." Yet touch a British interest, or what was supposed to be a British interest, and Parliament flared into excited activity. It could gather in strength and spit the term Judas at Edwin Montagu without having glanced at the Hunter Report on the Punjab disturbances.

Those who were in Parliament at the time tell of the excited attendances in the committee-rooms whilst the 1935 Act was under discussion. The insistence on safeguard piled on safeguard as if great human forces could be controlled by a few words printed on pieces of paper. Then the dead hand of indifference fell heavily on the House. Yet it was in many respects well equipped to exercise informed pressure on the Government of the day. Sir John Anderson brought the mellow wisdom and experience of a great administrator, fortified by five years' Governorship of Bengal, and Sir George Schuster the knowledge won as Finance Minister during a formative period. Mr. Edmund Harvey was always generous and progressive and Mr. Pethick-Lawrence full of inspired commonsense. Notable amongst the back-benchers, for he was out of office at the time, was a contribution from Mr. Oliver Stanley, presenting the view which was not heard often enough of the man of affairs whose vision was not dominated by long residence in India. We were beating the air; when the unofficial committees met to drink at the fount of visitors to Britain who came with the latest news from India it was a

good afternoon which brought a dozen members to one of the rooms upstairs to give half an hour to the subject.

Mr. Leo Amery, the Secretary of State, was truly the Minister in Chains. He was only allowed to reiterate that there could be no progress until Indians were agreed amongst themselves, and so there spread in the minds of Indian leaders of opinion the belief that their disagreements were being used as a weapon to retard all constitutional progress. Though those were very dark days, with political India holding aloof from the great world struggle, with unrest, civil disobedience, sporadic riots in the land, with the governing machine more bureaucratic and less responsible in the constitutional sense than for nearly a generation. Still there were notable factors on the other side of the account. The call for service brought two million volunteers to the Colours, an immense contribution to the common cause.

Whilst India was not the arsenal of democracy, it was the reservoir from which were drawn vast supplies of material for the armies in the field, and these were not paid for. Taking the long view, one is compelled to ask the purpose of this tremendous recruitment, of the submergence of the long-service regiments under a flood of recruits, officers and men, which brought new elements into the armed forces. And whether the ease with which the huge purchases of Indian material were financed by the accumulation of sterling balances in London did not induce either an extravagance or a carelessness of cost which resulted in the immense debt which still hangs like a millstone round any British Government. Let that pass; what is crucial is that when the hour of decision struck Parliament was in the fullest sense worthy of its Imperial duty.

Looking back upon those crowded years, what other government in the world would have sent one of its most distinguished members to a distant land to help its peoples to frame their own administration? What other country would on the morrow of the German surrender have despatched three members of the Cabinet to wrestle with intractable constitutional problems in the exhausting heat of the Delhi hot weather?

In view of the discussions which followed it is pertinent to recall the policies Sir Stafford Cripps was invited to implement. They were set forth in the full statement of aims and policy of August, 1940—a lifeless White Paper in form, and how one longed once again for the gold pen of Derby, but crystal-clear in purpose. Quoting from the draft statement on the Cripps Mission: "This amounted in short to a promise that, as soon as possible after the war, India should attain Dominion status, in full freedom and equality with this country and the other Dominions, under a Constitution to be framed by Indians, by agreement amongst themselves and acceptable to the main elements in Indian national life."

Sir Stafford failed and it was made a subject of criticism that his efforts were mainly concentrated on securing the adhesion of the National Congress and the Moslem League with little attention to the Liberal Party and the Indian States. Such criticism is wide of the mark. Congress and the League represented the only elements which could deliver the goods or, in other words, implement an agreement. The Cabinet Mission failed; it rejected, as it was bound to reject, partition, and the remission of the power which vested in Britain to two entirely separate sovereign states; partition, if it were to come, could emerge only from India itself.

Taking an objective view, it was well that both enterprises failed in the narrow technical sense. By the time the Cabinet Mission set about its task Moslem apprehensions that their culture and political and social life would become submerged in a unitary India had developed an irresistible force and the 'Two Nations' slogan of Mr. Jinnah dominated the scene.

There was another obstacle to agreement not so apparent; it was the conviction in the minds of political India, strongest amongst the Hindus, that never, no never, would Britain really part with authority, that whatever condominium might be patched up, there would always be British reserved power in the background. Nothing but a jolt would confront India with realities.

When that jolt came it was a jolt with a vengeance. The House of Commons has rarely been more startled than when Mr. Attlee came down to the Commons on 20 February, 1947,

to announce the final determination of the Government to remit to whatever authority might be set up in India entire responsibility for the governance of the land not later than June, 1948, and that Lord Wavell would relinquish the Viceroyalty and Lord Mountbatten assume office in his stead. The Lobbies buzzed as they did not buzz even during the most anxious days of the war.

A cohort of peers came down to the Lords charged with fiery denunciation determined to "larn" the Labour Party not to be toads. Then was witnessed a phenomenon with only one precedent in parliamentary history. It has been said that on only one occasion—that was Macaulay's speech on the copyright question—has a single speech determined a vote in Parliament. Lord Halifax rose in his seat, and with the authority of a former Viceroy, with all the weight accruing from his high character, declared that as he had no alternative to offer he could not challenge the decision of the Government. Not for the first time in its history the peers blenched and the debate was not pressed to a division. Wisely the Government submitted their policy to an affirmative motion and that created a situation which gave some Conservative members food for anxious thought.

There was no doubt that the Government would secure the full support of its own followers, but that was not enough. What was to be the attitude of the Conservative opposition? Was it to batter its head against the solid wall of inevitable facts, and to create anew in the minds of Indians the unease of believing that if returned to power a Conservative Government would undo, or whittle down, the independence which had again and again been promised to India and was now to pass to the stage of fruition?

A great, indeed a vital, decision had to be taken, and to some of us at least this transcended the obligations of Party. We had warned the Opposition leaders through the Chief Whip that we could not endorse censure of the Government without offering an alternative policy to meet the rapidly deteriorating situation in India and must hold ourselves free to express an independent judgment. The Opposition case was presented by Sir John Anderson in an amendment which amounted in

effect to the argument that the fixing of an arbitrary date prejudiced the working out of a suitable plan whether for a united or divided India; but his alternative offered little more than proceeding by two stages instead of one.

If I reproduce here some of the arguments I used myself it is in no spirit of egotism, but because they had some influence on the House and embodied all the hopes and ambitions of nearly half a century of life and work :

"I intervene with some reluctance in this debate because of its enormous complexity. I speak, as almost everyone who has addressed the House has spoken, with a very high and grievous sense of responsibility. I have a sense of responsibility to my political friends, but that is the least of all. In relation to India I know no party; only what conduces, in my opinion, to the welfare and prosperity of India. I owe a certain responsibility to this House lest views based on long experience in India might mislead it. My overwhelming responsibility is to my Indian friends. Looking back over the years of my life there, I remember all the kindness, generosity and sympathy I received from scores and hundreds of Indians in all parts of the country.

"When I came to this House I had no prospect of any political ambition being fulfilled, because I had none. But I was hoping for one thing more than anything else—that I might be able in this House to assist towards an understanding of the Indian position which would in some measure repay those rich gifts of friendship and kindness received during a life-work there. Among my Indian friends, particularly those not specially associated with political parties, as well as those who took an active part in public life, I found an overwhelming desire for an equal status among the nations of the world. That came up in all sorts of odd ways. May I give an instance? Some years ago, before political passions were so great as they are today, I was speaking to an old business friend, a man whom we met on terms of entire equality for years, and a companion, the Chief Minister of an Indian State, remarked: 'Now, Lalji, why don't you go to London?' My friend flushed, and said: 'Never as a slave.' I said: 'What nonsense you are talking; they will deal with you in England



as you are, as a man, irrespective of the political status of your country.'

"Again he repeated: 'Never as a slave.' That impressed me greatly because if that were the feeling of men of this character and position it seemed to me to indicate a state of affairs and a political system which must give us pause. Now, this equality of stature can come in only one way, by placing in the hands of Indians themselves the governance of their country, and making them entirely responsible for it, so that wherever they may go they can hold their heads high amongst the nations of the world, as an equal among them, with immense opportunities and resources behind them.

"That is not the main issue before this House tonight. We are all agreed that India shall develop to full self-government. Some of us hope that she will desire to remain within the Commonwealth and Empire. I am convinced that her greatest hope for the future is within the Commonwealth and Empire, but I agree that if she opts to remain completely outside it, independent and in treaty relations with us, that is her business. So tonight we are reaching, very fast, the final stage in our political association with India. We are realizing within the next few months, not much more, what was said by Munro more than a century and a quarter ago, and by Macaulay more than a century ago, the fulfilment of our connexion with India by the entire control of their own affairs and their own destiny by Indians themselves.

"There is one aspect of this progress which has been mentioned in the course of this debate, and about which I think it is worth while refreshing our memories tonight. The first real step towards the establishment of an independent Indian Government was taken in 1917. I mention 1917 for a specific reason. It is now 1947. A whole generation has passed, and has grown up in India before we now reach the final stage in our policy. If the Government be charged with precipitancy or undue haste, surely the answer is that thirty years is a big span in the life of nations, and a whole generation cannot pass without being moved profoundly in the direction I have indicated, and moved under no ordinary circumstances.

"We had the First World War, and its doctrine of self-

determination. We have had the recent war, with the Atlantic Charter, and that applies to India as much as to any part of the world. We have had that great tidal wave of the Japanese invasion sweeping across the whole of Eastern Asia, right through Malaya, until it broke upon Imphal, and there it was stayed. Think on these things! We had taken upon ourselves the immense responsibility for the protection of these huge areas and ask yourselves if any people could be other than profoundly moved and stimulated by the gigantic events that have taken place under our own eyes.

"The time is desperately short; should we be any nearer a solution if the Government had said two years hence or three years hence? Would not that time have been spent in futile wrangling, jockeying for position, hair-splitting, and, in the final issue, would not the decision have to be taken more or less in the same space as that which has now been fixed? Therefore I cannot see that if we had drifted another year or two we should be any nearer a decision than we are now. In another House, a noble Lord, who is very greatly respected by his old colleagues here, and to whose work at the India Office was paid ungrudging tribute by those who knew it, said that it took seven years to fashion the 1935 Act, and yet it failed. Are we going to fashion an Act for India in these eighteen months? I think the reply would be that the Act of 1935 failed in its main purpose because it took seven years. Therefore, the only chance of success now is a speedier decision. All through those weary years of waiting—the two years for the Simon Commission, three years for the Round Table Conference in London, eighteen months the Joint Select Committee, and then a further delay before it was endorsed—I myself, working in conjunction with those actively associated with this constitutional task, felt their spirits, their hopes and anticipations fall down and down as the dreary years passed before any decision was reached—and then cold disappointment.

"In the result, one of the greatest Acts in the history of Parliament, one of the greatest Measures for the renunciation of power that we were competent to exercise, failed in its full effect because of these delays. If it had not failed in its full

effect, we should not be discussing any Indian problem today, because that Constitution contained within itself the seeds of expansion and development sufficient to meet the growing needs of the country as they arose. So I say again, with all the doubts and dangers we see as we look ahead, I cannot criticize the Government for imposing a time factor now, for time is the essence of any solution we can hope to reach. As I cannot find a clear, definite and workable policy other than that which the Government have made out, I, for one, cannot oppose them in the action they are taking.

"The whole House listened with profound respect to the notable address of the Right Hon. Gentleman the Member for the Scottish Universities (Sir J. Anderson) yesterday. I listened to that great speech in the hope of finding an alternative policy to that which the Government have propounded. I failed to find it. I failed to find any alternative except that he wants to proceed by two stages instead of one. That, indeed, is a thing which demands consideration. At some time we must have an appointed day, whether it is the Government's appointed day or the appointed day which the Right Hon. Gentleman foreshadowed. But in the interval, in the interim, what is to be the state of India?

"How are we to maintain or improve the efficiency of the machinery in the intervening period which may make the appointed day considerably protracted? My Right Hon. Friend said that we should inject into the Civil Service a special cadre of officials who can refresh and strengthen it. No special cadre of officials could effectively be introduced. Quite apart from the fact that their presence will be unwelcome, there will be no desire to help or stimulate them, but, on the other hand, human nature being what it is, there will be a desire to embarrass and make things difficult and unsatisfactory for them. Nor can we hope to reinforce and reinvigorate the police by a large injection of Army officers. The language question, and others, provide difficulties, and unless we are to supersede the whole of our Provincial Governments from their functions under the Act of 1935 and go back to a period of direct rule where the Governors will take sole responsibility, the police will have to work under Indian

Ministers in charge of law and order. That, I think, rather convincingly disposes of that question.

"So we come down to this crucial fact. Here is the definite decision of the Government and here is the date fixed for its fulfilment. I want for a few moments to deal with three main issues arising out of it. There is, first of all, the position of the Indian States. I fully accept the principle that the Indian States have a great contribution to make to the future of India. Sometimes I have heard people say, as they pass from the States to British India, that the people look a little happier when they cross the border into Indian State Territory. The Indian Princes and States have made their choice. Very little attention was given to a remarkable speech made a few months ago by the Nawab of Bhopal, in which he declared himself in favour of the full independence of India, and said so in the most uncompromising terms. In the discussions for participation in the Constituent Assembly which are now going forward we see that the State of Baroda has already defined the terms of its representation. Many Hon. Members have spoken of the position of the Moslems. I speak from a personal standpoint when I say that they are among some of my best and warmest friends, and I am convinced that they demand the surest protection for their economic and cultural interests that can be devised. I believe the Moslems made a mistake in staying out of the Interim Government, and I think it will be the greatest mistake for them to stay out of the Constituent Assembly, for the work of that Assembly must go on, and, if they refrain or resile from it, they will not have their proper share and influence in fashioning India's constitution.

"When we consider the case of the Scheduled Castes, to whom we desire to extend the maximum share of independence, we must feel uneasy. All that we can do for the Scheduled Castes is to write into the treaty, or seek to write into the Constitution, the principles of their protection; but the ultimate force behind their protection must be in the country itself and in the Government of that country. If we can secure them legislative protection, we cannot secure them social protection, and it is social protection which goes to the root of the matter.

"We ought to get away from this parrot cry: 'Agreement first and progress afterwards.' There is nothing which causes so much exasperation in India, because it is felt that it is humbug, it is construed into a pretext for holding on to power. I have given these few impressions of mine on the great issue which we have before us. The Government have taken this immense decision, I am convinced, with full knowledge and with the highest sense of responsibility. No one in the House today can say how it is going to work out. No one can say what form of government will be developed in the few months that remain before we hand over this supreme task to India. No one can even say definitely that there will be Union Government, or what may happen under the second alternative in the White Paper. I do not think we should be wise or equal to our responsibilities if we run away with the immediate conclusion that there can be no central Government to which we can hand over these powers. I clearly see a contingency in which that may be practicable, although not perhaps entirely what we should wish. The responsibility is the Government's. They must bear it. There can be no going back. What should be the attitude of this House towards it? I commend to your earnest consideration the words of one to whose knowledge and stature I can lay no claim; it is to say to India: 'We are with you with the utmost of our power and to the limit of our resources to help you on with the task that you are in.'"

Once the great decision was taken how swiftly events moved to their appointed end! The Indian Independence Bill was introduced on 5 July; the second reading was on the 10th and was not challenged by the Opposition; it passed rapidly through the committee stages substantially without amendment; read a third time on 15 July; and received the Royal assent on the 18th. The effect on India was magical; confronted for the first time with real responsibility, realizing that Parliament meant what it said and that the future of the country lay in their own hands, political India came to rapid conclusions. The inevitability of partition was accepted by the Indian National Congress; the ancillary if regrettable consequence, the division of Bengal and the Punjab, was agreed

to; and with one exception—the future of Kashmir, which at the time seemed to be a subsidiary issue—the complex machinery of readjustment functioned with unexpected smoothness.

With the passage of the Independence Act the Deputy Speaker remarked in the Lobby: "Stanley, you have sung your swan song." A little squeak remained.

The closing scene in this great drama was intensely British. It was Friday, 5 December, 1949. There was the usual sprinkling of members in attendance. The Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, Sir Philip Noel-Baker, introduced a measure of a few clauses bearing the cryptic title of "India (Consequential Provision) Bill." The purpose of this Bill, which marked the final devolution of the authority of Parliament over India, was set forth in a few simple words—to:

Make provision as to the operation of the law in relation to India, and persons and things in any way belonging to or connected with India, in view of India's becoming a Republic while remaining in the Commonwealth.

Brief speeches were made, charged with good feeling towards the new Dominion. The Bill passed rapidly through its stages. And in this manner, without fuss, without advertisement, there was legalized a striking phase illustrative of the growth of the Commonwealth—acceptance of the principle that a State could remain a member State if it adopted a republican form of government by acceptance of the King as the symbol of the free association of its independent members and as such the head of the Commonwealth. If that doctrine could have been accepted earlier there is every reason to believe that Burma, on attaining its independence, would have remained a member of the Commonwealth, too.

Is a personal note permissible? In supporting the Bill a kindly friend on the Labour benches spoke of my own part in these discussions, saying: "On the subject of our relations with our great sister nation of India, he has always proved a sound guide and it is not without real justification that he claimed some gift of prophecy in that speech in this House to which he referred so movingly just now." In associating himself with this tribute, Sir Philip Noel-Baker added: "For many

years he (Stanley Reed) has rendered great service to the cause of friendship between the peoples of the United Kingdom and the peoples of India and Pakistan, and I think he felt this afternoon that his work had borne fruit. It will be of value for generations to come."

Then in a review of the debate in the *Spectator*, the virile Conservative member, whose identity was thinly disguised by the initials J. A. B. C., used these words: "Later Sir Stanley Reed, who has given so much of a long life to improving relations with India, spoke with deep emotion about the future. Sir Stanley is not contesting his Division at the next election, and this may well be his last parliamentary speech. If it is, no man could have contributed a finer or more appropriate *Nunc dimittis*."

With that I was well content. Is the path of the Party member who seeks to preserve a reasoned independence so very difficult after all?

Before leaving these historic events two questions arise, and some answer should be attempted. Was partition inevitable? Was there no alternative to sundering the unity of India which was the pride and glory of the British connexion and which had knit India in one whole for wellnigh a century? The decision must be viewed in the light of the conditions of 1947, not from an objective standpoint in later years. I sought to answer it in the *Spectator* in August of that year, and from those opinions I have no reason to resile.

"Was partition inevitable? Yes and no. It is often forgotten that the forces of fission between Hindus and Moslems have continuously developed with the transfer of power which began with the advent of the Liberal Government in 1906. The last opportunity of preserving a united India was missed when the great Act of 1935 was not put into operation at the centre. That Act, though cluttered up with meaningless safeguards and irritating reservations, held the promise of a solid Indian Federation, with Hindus, Moslems and the States linked in a strong centre, whilst the Provinces with home rule developed their special characteristics; it contained the seeds of growth into Dominion status from within. Failure to implement it at the centre whilst establishing self-government

in the Provinces intensified separatism. The Congress Governments in the Provinces left the Moslem in the wilderness.

"If Mr. Jinnah had attained his end in the establishment of a Commission to investigate the working of these Governments, I doubt if he could have produced any evidence that they were anti-Moslem in their actions. But what is not beyond doubt is that the Moslems felt that they were underdogs—that neither their culture nor their economic status was assured, and therefore there could be no security save in Pakistan. This feeling grew under Mr. Jinnah's astute leadership until it became irresistible, especially when the Congress acceptance of the Cabinet Mission's plan was prejudiced by meaningless reservations.

"Has Pakistan come to stay? A glance at the map of India with the Pakistan areas shaded presents an arresting picture. Eastern Pakistan is just a blob on the sub-continental mass. The Moslems are in the main converts from Hinduism, almost indistinguishable in dress and manner from their Hindu fellow-countrymen. But this is not the first time Bengal has been divided; there was Lord Curzon's partition, which gave this neglected area a corporate existence of its own and vivified it with new energy. Predominantly agricultural, it has its own seaport at Chittagong, and although industrialists lament the separation of the jute producers from the mills along the Hughli, well, Lancashire draws its cotton from Texas, Egypt and India.

"Far otherwise is it with Western Pakistan. I blinked with astonishment when the League decided to make Karachi the seat of authority, but reflection shows that it is, in fact, a wise move. It gives Western Pakistan a seaport with potentialities of development; the greatest airport in Asia; the backing of the huge Indus irrigation works; and a reasonably homogeneous *bloc* of Sind, Baluchistan, the Western Punjab and the North-west Frontier Province in close proximity to the Islamic States of Afghanistan, Persia, Irak and the Arab kingdoms. The tragedy is the division of the Punjab. Under successive coalition governments and an irrigation system unsurpassed in boldness the province has made immense progress; but the use of its waters and its economy is based on



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a single administration. If Sir Cyril Radcliffe and his colleagues on the Boundary Commission have the wisdom of serpents, they must separate the six million Sikhs into two parts, and the Sikh, a lion in battle, a dour, stubborn man in peace, will be as uneasy a bedfellow in Pakistan as the Sudeten German to Czechoslovakia."

The shadow of Junagadh and Kashmir did not then hang menacingly over the land.

Was the bold and courageous determination of the Government irrevocably to fix a date not later than 1948 for the establishment of independence in India wise, or should a longer period have been allowed for the evolution of the new constitution and the adaptation of the administrative services? That will be a debatable point as long as the English language is spoken. What is clear beyond doubt is that no less drastic a decision would have brought Indian leaders to the point of agreement; and that no one is competent to pronounce a dogmatic opinion who was not in India at the time. Firm in my belief that the Government was right—that this was a great act of statesmanship—there is consolation in the knowledge that the distinguished man who was nearer the heart of affairs than any other save Lord Mountbatten averred his conviction that Independence Day was not fixed too soon but if anything a year too late. Also in the knowledge that thoughtful friends, witnesses of the fearful killings in the Punjab and Bengal, spectators of the massive and distressing migrations of millions of folk fleeing from fear, are sure that if independence had been delayed there would have been civil war of the most bloody description.

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THEIR LAURELS GATHERED—THEIR DUTY DONE

IN THE LAST years of the nineteenth century a witty member of the Bombay Civil Service drew an imaginary picture of the departure from India of the remaining members of the British Services, which he put at 1983. It was admittedly a skit, an amusing skit; this was his picture of the march of these emblems of British rule to the place of embarkation: "The enormous procession was wound up by the tag-i-rag and bab-i-tel, eastern words signifying *hoi polloi*, who testified their joy by repeated shouts of '*urree badmash*' and '*jao soor*,' which means may peace and prosperity wait on your path and may the ways of ocean be made smooth beneath your returning feet." It was not, of course, meant seriously, but there was a substratum of earnestness in the jape; it reflected the thought that when the hour struck for the transference of power from British to Indian hands the dominant feeling would be one of hostility and even of contempt. How very different was the scene.

If the Civil Service was the steel frame of the British administration, as Lloyd George said it was, if the Civil Service was the Indian Empire, as some of the wisest of those who studied eastern affairs said it was, nothing is more remarkable than the manner of its dissolution. Looking back, it is a pregnant thought that half a century ago students of Indian policy saw far more clearly the trend of events than the succeeding generation absorbed in the urgent problems of administration.

For instance, in that illuminating book, *Asia and Europe*, Meredith Townsend used these significant words: "With their eagerness, their early developed brains, and above all

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their numbers, the Indians will, in the present stage of English opinion, prove irresistible, and will, I venture to predict, constitute within fifty years the whole Imperial Service—which I, for the last time, repeat is the Indian Empire.” Yet the British element in this great Service came to no abrupt end; it faded away. There was no recruitment during the war. The vague suggestions that it might be reconstituted after the war had only to be examined to be dismissed. No one with any knowledge of the situation could dream of offering to the young Briton a twenty-five-year covenant of assured service, and nothing less would suffice; on a short-term contract the recruit was lost before his service was of material value.

When the war came to an end there were many on the verge of retirement and others who had remained at their posts from a high sense of duty. The offer of proportionate retiring pensions was attractive to those who did not feel that their position was assured under the new régime; a few remained in the service of Independent India and Pakistan to facilitate the transfer of power, and passed on. It would be hard to say when the British element in the Indian Services actually came to an end, and when the last member departed from India and Pakistan and the administrative burden was entirely borne by their Indian colleagues. These thoughts are refreshing; the British officials left nothing behind them save goodwill and, in instances of long service, affection. Afterwards there was the testimony of men brought into direct contact with officialdom that the most efficient branches were those where Indian members of the old Civil Service were in charge, maintaining the high tradition of efficiency, discipline, integrity and devotion to their work which marked the most distinguished cadre of officials the world has seen. Meredith Townsend was only a year or two out in his forecast of the day when Indians would constitute the whole Service.

Far otherwise was it with the British Army. If the Indian Civil Service was the steel frame, the Indian Empire, it was the pale shadow of authority without the British Army. In one of his best stories, Kipling, meditating on the spectacle of Mulvaney pricking a blister on his toe, paused to consider how much the strength of the Government depended on that

foot. The British Army in India, these fifty or sixty thousand of all arms, were very much more than the Wardens of the Marches; they were the symbol and strength of internal security. On innumerable occasions the Army was called on for duties which the soldier detests—the use of force for the suppression of disorder; only in later years was the Police so strengthened that it could take on this responsibility, save on special occasions, without the support of the military.

If, therefore, bitterness and rancour were anticipated when the British finally withdrew, who would not have expected them to be directed against the Army rather than the Civil Services?

Yet it is one of the paradoxes of Indian history that the last British troops sailed with the ardent respect of their Indian comrades. This is the more remarkable when it is remembered that for a generation or two the military system was harder on those Indian classes whose bent was naturally towards a military career. The middle-class Indian family, if it could scrape up the money—as it often did by great sacrifice—could pass the favoured son into one or other of the Services, and then there was no bar to the higher posts. The Indian soldier, until the very limited opening of Sandhurst in 1919, could not as a rule look beyond the dignified, but respectable rank of Resaldar or Subadar Major, subordinate to the youngest joined British lieutenant.

Lord Curzon marked this hiatus in his all-embracing survey of the Indian scene and called into being the Imperial Cadet Corps under that gallant figure Sir Pertab Singh to open a military career to the cadets of the Princely Houses who were rotting in idleness in their Home States, and a stirring spectacle they presented, on ceremonial occasion, with their dashing uniforms, superbly mounted—born horsemen all—but as there was no place for them in the military hierarchy they never fulfilled their purpose. It stands to the enduring honour of successive generations of British officers that even in these circumstances they inspired a spirit of comradeship which welled up when the last days dawned. The British regiments which withdrew from Bombay and Karachi did so with all the honours of peace; a dignified and stately exchange

of ceremonial with their Indian comrades and the panoply of changing guard.

The moving letter which General K. M. Cariappa, Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, addressed to Field-Marshal Lord Birdwood, paying tribute to the officers and other ranks responsible for the building up of the Indian Army, deserves more than evanescent record in the current journals. These are refreshing words in depressing times:

"I write this to you, as the seniormost serving officer of the Indian Army, on behalf of myself and all Indian officers of our Army, to thank you and all officers of the Commonwealth who were responsible for building our Army in the manner it has been built, and also for all the help, advice and guidance you gave us, which trained our officers so well that we were able to replace British officers in our Army after our country gained her freedom on 15 August, 1947. We know that the foundations of our Army were truly and well laid by the blood and sweat of you all and of all those gallant officers who have gone before you. You left behind for us such efficient machinery that, under our command and control, it stood up to the 'buffetings' of the many military problems which came after partition. We thank also all the British other ranks, both males and females, who worked in our Army from time to time in various capacities for their contribution in this respect."

And: "At an impressive ceremony in Dehra Dun, the King's Colours of the thirty-six units of the Indian Army and of the Navy were laid up and handed to General Thimmayya, Commanding Officer of the National Defence Academy, for safe keeping. British and Indian officers shared the deep emotions of an occasion which marked the end of one period of long association and comradeship, and perhaps the beginning of another. The Defence Minister asked Sir Archibald Nye, the King's representative, to convey to His Majesty the grateful thanks of the regiments and the high esteem in which the Colours would be held."

Regrets there must be at the passing of the miracle of British rule in India; there is rich compensation in memories as dear as these.

On 26 January, 1950, India was proclaimed a sovereign democratic republic with celebrations all over the country: the Supreme Court was inaugurated at Delhi; members of the Indian Parliament were sworn in. In one sense the movement from a Dominion to a Republic was in words rather than in fact. India became a sovereign independent State when full responsibility for the conduct of her own affairs was transferred from Parliament to the Government of India, for Dominion Status—to quote Mr. Fraser, the former Prime Minister of New Zealand—is independence with something added.

India assumed these immense responsibilities under a constitution slowly hammered out in a wise spirit of idealism and compromise in three years of devoted labour. There has been criticism of the years spent in the adventure in comparison with the speedier progress in other States. It is unjustified. When the almost inconceivable complexity of the task is appreciated, the marvel is not that it took so long as that it was done with complete agreement in so short a time. That constitution is instinct with the spirit of freedom and liberty, of democracy and the rights of minorities, of deep consideration for the rights of the common man; those who framed it can look upon their handiwork and find it good. It is the instrument for the good governance of three hundred and twenty millions of people. The working of that constitution is remitted to the hands of men who have grappled with the immediate problems of independence with a vigour and statesmanship—the greatest migration in history, the integration of the Indian States—which command our confidence and respect, and entitle them to the support of all men of good intent.

There is yet another pregnant thought; Lord Curzon declared that the key of Asia is held in Calcutta; the key of Asia is today held in Delhi. North and East vast peoples are held in the iron grip of communism, with its rejection of the ethical ideals India holds so dear; with its complete rejection of freedom and liberty; with its horrid subordination of all human rights to the supposed needs of the State. Standing midway between Europe and the Pacific, India is the trustee

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and guardian of liberty; it is the lighthouse by which all men who love liberty shape their course. An impressive responsibility, yet what an opportunity!

In the early 'thirties a new term was used to indicate the means taken to meet the rising tide of nationalism in India—the word fulfilment. The ceremonies which marked the establishment of the new republic were the fulfilment of the work begun on the plains of Bihar nearly two centuries ago. Running through the second century is one silver thread, not always visible, frequently lost in the actions and reactions of political conflict, but always there. From the assumption of responsibility by the Crown the administrative machine moved slowly, often how slowly, to the evolution of responsible government. From the first establishment of council in lieu of departmental administration, the enlistment of Indians for the making of laws and regulations to the beginnings of an electoral system in the Cross Act, the British instinct for democratic government acted like a ferment.

Independence Day in India was not revolution, not surrender; it was fulfilment. Looking back on these storied centuries, what should be our uppermost thought? Not a contemplation of the rule of law; of the efficient administrative machine fabricated by generations of devoted administrators; not the material achievements in spreading communications and impressive hydraulic works; but in the triumph of the spirit. When we sit down and absorb the sober liberalism and idealism of the constitution, there we can and should see the justification for the connexion between Britain and India which was the puzzled admiration of the world. An epoch has ended; a new and tremendous epoch has begun. In this triumph of humanism in a world threatened by the most sinister oppression since the invasion of the Goths, the Briton finds his monument for the work he has sought to do.

Looking forward, perhaps it will not be an impertinence if one who has studied Indian affairs for over half a century and has actively participated in the working of a parliamentary government based on a democratic franchise offers a few reflections. The framers of the constitution have sought to provide for every reasonable contingency. They have not; it

is not given to human intellect to attain finality. The constitution will be adapted and polished by convention and interpretation; newcomers to parliamentary life chafe at convention, but it is essential to harmonious working. Interpretation will be the responsibility of the Supreme Court. Will that interpretation be legalistic or constructive? A narrow legalistic attitude of mind can be terribly obstructive. For example, the Supreme Court of the United States of America would have emasculated Franklin Roosevelt's social policies crystallized in the New Deal if there had not been a change in the personnel; by the widest application of British law Mansfield ensured that no slave should stand on British soil. So a constructive cast of mind in the judges who will interpret the constitution is of all things demanded. Some apprehension has been expressed anent the overriding power in the centre to declare a state of emergency to meet a financial crisis and to give direction to the provinces. A strong centre is one of India's greatest needs.

There is no more fascinating field of inquiry than the study of the ebb and flow of authority between the Federal Government and its associated States; each movement of the tide leaves the high-water mark a little higher in the direction of Federal authority, if for no other reason than that the State means so much more to the individual citizen than in the days of individual *laissez faire*. So with the movement, perhaps the natural movement, towards linguistic areas and the splitting up of Provinces which have acquired a strong community spirit and a convenient administrative system. All experience shows that small administrative areas are backward, because men of exceptional ability migrate towards the larger field for their activities furnished by the centre. None can view the Indian scene without disquiet at any strong tendency to weaken the unity which has suffered one severe blow.

The language? There the Constituent Assembly has shown conspicuous wisdom; the only solvent of an admittedly complex position is experience. Yet when the Indian student looks back, cannot he find some compensation for the strain of higher education in a foreign tongue in the realization that it unlocked for him the learning of the world? There is no



contribution to knowledge which is not available in the English language; scarcely a country where English is not understood; nor an educated Indian who cannot exchange thought with a fellow-countryman whether he comes from Rameshwaram or Calcutta. We are advised that untouchability has been abolished and communalism banished. True, so far as words can ensure these aspirations are embodied in the charter, but there can be no meaning in them unless and until society recognizes its obligations to the Scheduled Castes, and minorities are invested with a sense of security. To pass a resolution is not to effect a reform.

More pregnant still is the thought that the Indian Republic is consummated in an hour when political freedom is impeached. The placid assumption that the highest form of government is a Parliament based on a democratic franchise is rejected in States which embrace hundreds of millions of the human race. It is a travesty of the word to call "democratic" the despotisms which crush the peoples behind the Iron Curtain and has been riveted on China. Nor—though this may be an unpalatable reflection—can anyone cognizant of the working of a free Parliament be unconscious of the possibility of establishing totalitarianism behind the façade of a democratic constitution.

It may startle readers to be reminded that a democratic dictatorship, or, in other words, an authoritative democracy, is the legacy of Napoleon. It found expression in the tawdry Second Empire; it armed Hitler with the abominable Nazi régime; the hollow sham is blatant in Eastern Europe today. The proud Republic of India has this dual responsibility. To safeguard India from the ceaseless penetration of a communism which would destroy the body and soul of her people and extinguish the torch of freedom which she holds aloft for the guidance of Asia in the years to come; and at the same time in the discharge of these formidable functions to preserve the fabric of democracy—a government responsible to her Parliament and a Parliament responsible to her people—without which the prattle of liberty is the sound of thorns crackling under the pot.

The great responsibility is in the strong hands of men who

have won confidence and deserve it. Once again, they are entitled to the support of all men of good intent. They have the trust of the great majority of the Indian people and the goodwill of the Commonwealth in their adventure. The attitude of Britain could not be more clearly defined than in the words of Lord Halifax, which turned the House of Lords from a retrograde path—with the uttermost of her goodwill and to the limit of her resources she rejoices with India in the hour of fulfilment.

What will be the position of the Briton under this new dispensation? Outwardly the stately façade of the Government of India remains unchanged. The Governor-General resides in the magnificent house at Delhi raised by the genius of Lutyens; the Indian legislatures meet in the Parliament house; the hierarchy of the Secretariats pursues its increasingly complex task under the same designations. In the States, as the former provinces are rightly named, the fabric stands—the Governors, the Ministries, the legislative bodies. The Head of the District remains the head of the district with the same functions and responsibilities, though under more rigorous control; the Police, the Forest Officers, the Public Works personnel carry on as before. The ports of Calcutta, Bombay, Karachi and Madras are crowded with shipping with this significant difference—a very substantial proportion of these vessels carry foodstuffs to fill the sinister gap between the requirements of the fast-growing population and indigenous production.

The streets of the State capitals are more desperately crowded than ever with a terrible shortage of housing and with numbers swollen, especially in Delhi, with the refugees who have not been resettled. The façade is unchanged; the wonderful administrative system Britain bequeathed to India and Pakistan functions; but behind the façade nothing is quite the same. From the President of the Republic to the humblest village official the personnel is entirely Indian; the responsibility and authority are entirely Indian. Parliament has shed the last remnant of its responsibility for the governance of the sub-continent and India will no longer figure in its debates; the India Office is merged into the department for Common-

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wealth Relations for such duties as remain. Yet there is this paradox. According to a statement from the High Commissioner for India in London, there were in February, 1951, more Europeans in India than at any time in its history. Presumably the Army is omitted from this estimate. Yet India still holds out to the Briton three glittering prizes: adventure, opportunity, responsibility.

Gone are the days when the Briton could enjoy in India any position of privilege. The Services are closed. The legislatures and municipal bodies to which he had access, either through special electorates or nomination, are closed. The industrial and commercial field is wider than ever. Never, no never, were the rulers of India and Pakistan so alive to the necessity of an immense development of public works and of industry to meet the needs of the increasing population; the scope of these enterprises is staggering in its magnitude. Even the capital resources mobilized through the improvement in the credit system will not suffice and there is room for British capital. Still more is the clamant need for technical skill and experience and for commercial practice until such time as the indigenous cadre is strengthened by training and knowledge.

Here is the Briton's opportunity. Here is the lure of adventure—work and play in an immensely diversified land on a far wider plane than offers in the crowded confines of the United Kingdom. Here is the assurance of opportunity. Working on a big scale in a period of tremendous expansion there is a field for constructive work far transcending the prospects in Britain. Here the Briton, and in particular the young Briton who makes good will find himself enjoying the stimulus of responsibility, with all the rich fruits it brings, whilst his compeers at home are struggling against the dead-weight of seniority.

Responsibility—what a goad it is to the competent! Further, opportunity and responsibility grow more and more cramped in this island, as one industry after another is nationalized, and the paralysis of bureaucracy fastens on the body politic. This in a land where the sun really shines. That sun, and this is one of the most remarkable changes in India,

has lost its terrors. Within living memory it was treated with profound respect and even with fear. The day began with the break of dawn, and certainly in the cities it was deemed wise to finish the morning's exercise soon after eight o'clock. If work called the cheerful slave abroad later than that, he donned a pith helmet, which grew to prodigious proportions in the burning plains, and as the hot weather arrived the poor human frame was fortified by a spine protector—a pad of quilted cotton buttoned over the back of the tunic. Hence arose that curious practice in civilian life, the topi bag; no sahib was allowed to depart on his occasions without being charged with a neat little khaki bag enshrining his grey homburg for wear after sunset. For Anglo-Indian conventions were a fearful and wonderful thing; neglect your wife and beat your mother-in-law and remain a gentleman; wear a topi after sunset and become an outsider.

The change was gradual and was clinched by the Americans; familiar with their own sunny south and torrid middle-west, they laughed at these solar terrors, and Anglo-India learnt that with open-necked shirts to allow free respiration and plenty of fluid and salt to repair the loss of copious perspiration the sun is a good friend rather than a dread enemy. If the horse is only for the few and the gun is undisturbed in its case save for rare occasions, the golf-club and tennis racket reign in their stead. If taxation is high and unlikely to become less oppressive, India is not the only part of the Commonwealth where the Inland Revenue Commissioners are the lords of the earth; salaries have been adjusted to the higher cost of living and every sound firm has its own provident fund which furnishes a far better retiring allowance than any system of pensions. A good life, an expansive life in a land abounding in interest for those with a spark of the spirit of adventure within them. Who, stirred by a divine discontent, would prefer to mildew in the placid groves of Surbiton and Welwyn?

So India calls, but not to the average man; the Indian will beat the average man all the time. Nor to him who looks on his years in India as years of exile and is always glancing over his shoulder at the outgoing steamer or the westbound aeroplane; the improvement in communications was a powerful

factor in converting the Anglo-Indian from a resident attached to the land into a bird of passage. Above all, to the Briton who seeks a career in India, and identifies himself with the land and the peoples, tearing off the hair shirt of insularity, shunning like a pestilence the narrow exclusiveness of the club, India extends a friendship rich in its warmth and generosity, a precious possession during the working years and a golden memory in the autumn of life.

What is the position of the Indian States in the new dispensation? To those who knew their India nothing was more astonishing in these tremendous changes than their disappearance. It is folly to mince words and pretend that the States have been "integrated"—blessed word—into India and Pakistan; they have vanished like the unsubstantial shadows of a dream; the powers of the rulers and their administrative responsibilities have been assumed by the governments of the two Dominions, and the former rulers are pensionaries of the dominant powers. The financial settlements are liberal, but they rest on the goodwill of the powers that be and, to put it bluntly perhaps, but realistically, they are conditioned on good conduct; they cannot be enforced by any rule of law.

The Government of India has made it clear beyond the shadow of doubt that the continuance of these pensions depends on unqualified acceptance of the régime established by the Independence Act, and any breach of the agreements reached will be met by a disallowance of the annual payments promised as the price of surrender of ruling and administrative powers—pensions broadly fixed on the basis of what would be a reasonable sum to represent the privy purse of the Princes in the financial position of the States.

At the turn of the century the Indian States were rapidly emerging from medievalism. Any glance at the map of the sub-continent before it was redrawn reveals the great part they occupied in the body politic. There are shown the great blobs of yellow amid the prevailing red depicting the areas still under the rule of hereditary Princes—a third of the area and a fourth of the population.

In the heart of the sub-continent stood the leading State of Hyderabad, with its eleven millions of subjects; in the

north-west the fairly homogeneous territories of the Rajput Princes, in the far south Travancore and Cochin, well administered and remote from the strengthening currents of political thought. Between Hyderabad and these South Indian States stood Mysore, with a modern constitution based on the treaty which marked the great act of rendition when after seventy years of British administration the territories once ruled by Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan were restored to the indigenous family.

Supplementing these big blocks, the mosaic of Kathiawar and Central India wellnigh baffled comprehension, and even the important Maratha States—Baroda, Gwalior, Indore—possessed islets of territory in British India—the legacy of the confusions caused by the predatory tactics of the early Maratha conquerors. In theory the principal States were secured by treaties declared inviolate and inviolable; in practice they were overshadowed by the paramountcy of the Ruling Power. Much ink was spilt over that indefinable term “paramountcy,” but there can be no doubt what it meant. One of the ablest officials to hold the portfolio of the Foreign Department put it thus: “I will admit no restrictions on the authority of the Paramount Power save such as it sets upon itself.” Indeed, there was no alternative; if the Government of India was to secure the Princes in their possessions, equally it was bound to exercise the right to protect the subjects of the States against misrule and oppression. Nor, though with reluctance, did it hesitate to exercise that authority even in States of the first rank, like Hyderabad and Kashmir.

The Indian States reached their zenith at the close of the First World War. The leaven, of course, was working before the Kaiser challenged the world. Even the most reactionary of the States could not remain immune from the yeast of responsibility fermenting in the adjoining territories. A new generation of rulers was emerging from the special colleges at Ajmer and Rajkot for the heirs and cadets of the ruling houses; and Lord Curzon, in memorable words, reminded the Princes of their special responsibilities, warning them that God had not given them a sanad to do nothing in perpetuity. A galaxy of remarkable men dominated the scene. The Maha-

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rajah of Gwalior loved a practical joke, but he could tuck his despatch box under his arm and discuss important issues with the Foreign Office or the Railway Board which worked the lines running through his territories without the assistance of a secretary, and any visit to his State found evidence of an efficient administration.

A series of gifted administrators working under a kindly Maharajah raised Mysore to the status of a British Province; but the outstanding figure was the Maharajah of Bikaner, who, inheriting a State where the Carpenter would have wept to see such quantities of sand, brought in the waters of the Sutlej to fertilize the barren lands and modelled a progressive administration on the best British practice. Tested by the ordeal of the First World War, the States threw all their resources into the struggle with splendid enthusiasm and generosity; at its close they stood higher in popular esteem than at any period. It is a little humiliating to our self-respect, but it is a patent fact—many travellers, and those without prejudice against British rule, found the people happier in the best Indian States than in the adjoining British Provinces.

Yet this imposing façade had two fatal defects. Disguise it as one might, the States were autocracies, slightly, very slightly, fettered by the paramountcy lurking in the background. There were shadowy constitutional bodies masquerading as representative assemblies, but they met only to register the will of the ruler. The States as a whole stood outside the orbit of the Government of India, responsible—so far as they were responsible—only to the Viceroy as the representative of the Crown. In season and out of season those who discerned the contribution the States could make to the policy of a united India urged them to lose no opportunity to come within the governing machine and welcomed the establishment of the Chamber of Princes to give them a corporate entity.

Starting with a flourish of trumpets, the Chamber declined in interest and importance. Perhaps the Maharajah of Bikaner held the office of Chancellor too long, for it was never of equal influence after he retired; but the root cause was the failure of the Princes to agree amongst themselves. The last chance of

preserving the States as separate entities in a federated India came within the Act of 1935. If the Princes had seized the opportunity of entering a federation then they might well have survived for a generation, gradually approximating their administrations to the prevailing conditions in the sub-continent as a whole. Why was the occasion missed?

Various influences were combined. The more the Princes studied the Instruments of Accession which were to have incorporated their States in the federation the less they liked them; they were reluctant to surrender any powers and so lost all. Many were genuinely disturbed at the movement of Congress elements to foment trouble from outside the States as a means of bringing pressure on the rulers, and so viewed with apprehension the position in which they might find themselves within the unified self-governing India. Indian politicians disliked the idea of the States being partners in the Government, fearful lest they should bring in a reactionary element; they could not see, or would not see, that the representatives of the States, however chosen, sitting cheek by jowl with the elected members from the British Provinces, could not remain uninfluenced by these contacts.

There was a grievous lack of driving power from Secretary of State and Viceroys. When all these influences are placed in the balance, they are outweighed by these decisive factors: the Princes could not agree amongst themselves and hastened to make their individual settlements; they had so little hold on their subjects that they were incapable of resistance. With the solitary exception of Hyderabad, where the "Police Action" was practised, and there less against the Nizam than against the camarilla which had seized power—something like a parallel régime was in being in the eastern provinces bordering on Madras—the Princes signed away their birthright for the promise of a pension; whilst grouped States remain on paper, all authority is exercised by the Central Government.

With their passing more was lost than the disappearance of islands of autocratic rule which could not survive indefinitely in any circumstances. The more the Indian scene is surveyed the more one is forced to regret the deepening greyness of life. With the mass of the population existence is



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a desperate struggle to win a subsistence from often a hungry soil myriads who are increasing in numbers at a catastrophic rate. For those in manufacturing industry there are the months of sordid toil in the dark satanic mills in the hope of periodic retirement in the fields from which they are reluctantly divorced. If it is argued, as it sometimes is, that the Hindus are weighed down by the oppressive doctrine of Karma, there is the spectacle of the eagerness with which they seize the occasions of the festivals—Cocoon Day, the Diwali feast of Light, the joyous pilgrimages to the sacred places of their faith. Politics and the dead hand of an overworked administration swamp culture outside a few favoured areas. The gifted Tagore family, who did so much to enrich the Bengali vernacular and for literature and art, have found no successors; a cloud of materialism overshadows the land. The best hope for the future lies in the small but rising band of writers, who in English and their own vernaculars are interpreting Indian society to the West.

In this grey world the Indian States preserved something of the traditional East, the life and colour of the Orient. The palaces were not masses of stone, but more like the great country houses of Britain. None was without its guest-house; all extended a generous and not extravagant hospitality. Pomp and circumstance there were on festival occasion; but for the most part the life was one of generous ease with a lighter touch than the austere régime over the border. Industry had not come to lay its unlovely hand on an agricultural people; the forest and the jungle were the sportsman's paradise freely opened to the lucky visitor. All this was perhaps anti-social in the modern sense of the term; all this possibly stood, for an epoch was bound to pass. It has vanished with a speed undreamt of, but two generations of Britons cherish memories of friendships rich in their abundance and kindnesses without restraint. Now the epoch has passed none should forget that when the Commonwealth and Empire took up the challenge of Germany in 1914 the Indian Princes were in truth the pillars of the throne and threw in their armed forces and their resources with both hands to serve the common cause.



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